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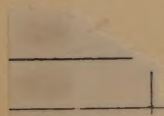
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ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE

1200-1582

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ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE

1200-1582

BY

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Academy*



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IN MEMORY
OF
GEORGIE

*"The least joy that is therein
A man shall know his own friend,
His wife, his father, and all his kin,
Of all this joy there is no end."*

A SERMON

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PREFACE

IN view of what I have said in Chapter I of this book, my prefatory remarks will be confined to making due acknowledgment to publishers and to individuals.

I am much indebted to the Oxford University Press for permission to print some extracts from Dr Orpen's *Song of Dermot and the Earl*, to the Early English Text Society, to H.M. Stationery Office, and to the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, for leave to make use of matter in certain of their publications. Especially must I thank Messrs Archibald Constable for allowing me to quote from Professor Arber's edition of Stanihurst's *Virgil*.

It gives me an especial pleasure to record my grateful indebtedness to Dr Goddard Orpen for much kind interest taken in this book, as well as for permission to make use of his *Song of Dermot*, and his pamphlet on New Ross; to Mr Robin Flower, of the British Museum, for his readiness in answering questions, and for some helpful references; to Miss L. U. Stone, M.A., for translating the Norman-French pieces; to Miss Mabel Day, D.Lit., for reading over three chapters in manuscript, and for many useful suggestions thereon; to Professor E. Curtis, M.A., for some helpful hints; and to Mr W. F. Figgis for the ungrudging loan of books.

Nor shall I omit to mention what I owe to the libraries of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, and of the Royal Irish Academy, as well as to Dr Williams's library in London. All three lend books, even rare ones, by post; that is an inestimable boon to one who lives in the heart of the country, a hundred miles from Dublin, and therefore a hundred miles from the best Irish libraries. Were it not for the facilities given by the above-named Institutions, and the courtesy of their librarians, this work could not have been undertaken.

ST JOHN D. SEYMOUR

ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE

1200—1582

CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF THE SUBJECT

As is fitting, much has been said concerning the Gaelic writers of Ireland, and on the many-branched literature produced by them from the earliest times to the present day; much has been written, too, on Anglo-Irish literature from the seventeenth century onward. But on the Anglo-Irish writers, and the literature they produced, in prose and in verse, in the period that commences (roundly) with the Anglo-Norman invasion, and ends with the last decades of the sixteenth century, very little has been said; there is not, indeed, any book dealing exclusively with the subject. The present work, therefore, is an attempt to give a connected account of the principal remains of this literature between the years 1200 and 1582. The earlier date is chosen because it represents the earliest possible year in which the first known piece could have been written; while the latter date is that of the printing of Stanihurst's translation of Virgil. The extant records of the Kilkenny mystery plays only commence in 1580, that is, only two years before the date determined for the close of our subject, and run on certainly to 1639.

The reader may, not unnaturally, ask the question: Was there any non-Celtic literature in Ireland in this period? To which it might be answered that even if not a single fragment survived it might yet be assumed with safety that something in the form of literature must have existed. One cannot imagine Anglo-Norman nobles and barons dwelling in semi-kingly state in their castles, or citizens and merchants living their busy lives in walled towns or flourishing seaports, or

monks in the seclusion of the cloister, or lads and lasses making holiday, without the solace of literature. And so, as will be shewn in the following chapters, such a literature did exist and flourish, and of this so much is extant, either as entire pieces or as fragments, as to make us realise that we have but a tiny portion of the whole, and that the greater part of it has been irretrievably lost.

This literature consisted of original pieces, of adaptations, and of translations. It looked to England, and even further afield, for its form and its inspiration—there is hardly a portion of it but finds a parallel in contemporary English literature—and does not appear to have been influenced at all by the native literature of Ireland. But this is only what is to be expected. In its very earliest stages it was the work of Anglo-Norman *trouvères*, its intermediate stages came into being in monasteries founded by the invaders, or in cities whose inhabitants cut themselves off by walls, mental and material, from the Irish-speaking people who surrounded them; while its final stages developed at a time when the English language and outlook was restricted to a small part of the country, namely to such places as Dublin, Kilkenny, and Waterford, which had always been strongholds of the English interest. It could only find an audience amongst those who spoke and wrote the languages of the invaders.

The various pieces, prose and verse, of which this literature was composed are written in one of three languages—Norman-French, Latin, and English.* Matter in Irish, even when written by persons of Anglo-Norman descent, is entirely outside the scope of the present volume.

The first of these, Norman-French, was the language of cultured and aristocratic circles. We have in it two long poems, *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* and *The Entrenchment of New Ross*, both of which are the work of professional *trouvères*. Jofroi of Waterford, too, made lengthy prose translations into

* See a useful article by Professor E. Curtis, entitled "The Spoken Languages of Medieval Ireland", *Studies* for June, 1919, pp. 234-54.

that language, but accomplished this task in France, not in Ireland. Doubtless much more was written, but there only survive a few short pieces and fragments, such as the eight-line alliterative poem attributed to the Earl of Desmond, the alliterative proverbs which may also have come from his pen, a few lines on one of the account rolls of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Dublin, and two couplets of love songs in the Kilkenny fragments contained in the Red Book of Ossory. In that manuscript there is also a poem entitled *The Proverbs of the Sibyl*, but this appears to have been written in France, or rather, translated from Latin into French verse by a man named Bohoun.* Its presence in the Red Book is a further proof, if such were needed, of the popularity enjoyed by literature in the French language in Kilkenny at this period. At the same time Norman-French was the language of law and commerce. The earlier Acts of Parliament were written in that tongue, and so were the statutes and ordinances of cities such as Dublin, Galway, and Waterford. But it was not deeply rooted, and from the purely literary point of view was superseded by English.†

Latin was the language of the Church and the learned professions, and as such was used by Anglo-Irish and Gaelic writers alike.‡ The most valuable of the pieces that survive in that language are the works of Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh, who died in 1360; the contemporary narrative of the proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler and her associates in 1324; and a short Goliardic poem on women. From the fifteenth century comes James Yonge's narrative of the visit of Laurence Rathold to St Patrick's Purgatory. In the next century Richard Stanihurst's family wrote in Latin, while he himself composed in that language several

* Portion of this has been printed in *Hist. MSS Commission, 10th Report, Appendix, Part v, p. 253.*

† See T. Vising, *Anglo-Norman Language and Literature*, p. 25.

‡ See M. Esposito's articles on the Latin writers of medieval Ireland in *Hermathena*, xiv, p. 519, xv, p. 353, xvi, p. 58; and in *Studies* for December, 1913.

epitaphs and epigrams, pieces ecclesiastical and theological, and a history of Ireland down to the time of Henry II.

But it is in the English language that we find the most extensive remains of that literature which had an exotic growth in this country for three centuries or more, after which it became indigenous. Nearly all that survives of the verse written during the fourteenth century is contained, with other pieces, in a single manuscript in the British Museum, classed Harley 913. Of this, and of its wanderings, something must be said.

It is a small duodecimo volume, consisting of sixty-four leaves of vellum, and the work of different scribes. It contains fifty-two items; for the most part these are in Latin, three are in Norman-French, while scattered through the whole are seventeen poems in Middle English, in connection with some of which there appears before us the elusive figure of Friar Michael of Kildare. These last have been published by Dr W. Heuser in his *Die Kildare-Gedichte: die ältesten mittel-englischen Denkmäler in anglo-irischer Überlieferung*.^{*} Though they differ much from each other in the nature of their contents, yet thirteen of them are connected by a similarity of dialect, and in many instances of phraseology, and form the earliest extant remains of the English language as written in Ireland. These poems appear to be all in the same hand, though there is some variation in the size of the script. Heuser is of the opinion that the greater part of the manuscript was written between 1308 and 1315; though one item at least, the *Proverbia Comitum Desmondie*, cannot be earlier than 1330.

At the end of the table of contents in the catalogue of the Harley MSS (begun in 1708) is the following note by the compiler: "I believe that this MS was written in Ireland; and that the blasphemous things therein were occasioned by the envy of the Franciscans against the Monks". This statement, however, goes much too far. It is plain from a study

^{*} *Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik*, Heft xiv (Bonn, 1904).

of its table of contents that many of the items, blasphemous and religious alike, were not composed in Ireland, but came from England and the Continent. Furthermore, some of the pieces have no direct connection with any religious or monastic body. But that the manuscript was put together in Ireland, and that certain of the pieces were composed and committed to writing in that country, seems beyond question.

Let us see if a more definite conclusion can be reached with respect to the place of writing of certain of the pieces, or if the home of the manuscript in the fourteenth century can be ascertained with any degree of certainty.

There are several points that bear on the question: (1) Many of the items in it are directly connected with Ireland and nowhere else, e.g. the ballad on the death of Sir Peter de Bermingham, the poem on the entrenchment of Ross, etc. (2) Some Irish words appear in a somewhat corrupt form in the English poems. (3) The manuscript contains several documents dealing with the Franciscans, and so would seem to have been connected with a House of that Order. (4) Of one poem in the collection we know the author, as he has preserved his name for us in the last stanza of it:

This sang wroght a frere,
Frere Michel Kyldare,

or, as we should say in modern English, "Friar Michael of Kildare". (5) In one of the satirical poems, the well-known *Land of Cokaygne*, there are found allusions, which Heuser regards as indications of local topography, to "a fair abbey of white monks and of grey", and to "the mochil grey abbey". Now the only "grey abbey" in Ireland in the possession of the Franciscans (Grey Friars) was found at Kildare, and in this, be it noted, was the burial place of Sir Peter de Bermingham, the subject of one of the ballads in the manuscript under consideration. There was also at Kildare a House of White Friars or Carmelites, while *Cokaygne* speaks of "a great fair nunnery". The allusion to the last, and

the inclusion (apparently) of *two* orders of *monks* in one House, may all be a confused recollection of the Celtic establishment set up at Kildare by St Brigit, in which monks and nuns lived under the same roof, though separated by a partition wall. (6) It has already been said that the greater part of the manuscript appears to have been written between 1308 and 1315.

From what has been said above it may be assumed with a considerable degree of certainty that in the opening years of the fourteenth century the manuscript was in the possession of, and partly composed at, the Franciscan Monastery at Kildare. If this be conceded, it affords us an interesting picture of the varied literature read in an Irish House at that period, for some of the pieces are non-Irish, some are purely religious, others decidedly secular, while others again are bitter and even blasphemous satires on monasticism.

Something may now be said regarding the later history of the manuscript. It came, apparently as a result of the dissolution of the monasteries, into the possession of a certain George Wyse, whose name appears on the second folio, and whom Crofton Croker identifies with the person of that name who was Bailiff of Waterford in 1566, and Mayor of that city in 1571. On fol. 29 an earlier owner, also of Waterford, has inscribed a note which is, unfortunately, almost obliterated: "Iste liber pertinet ad J(oannem) . . . Waterford . . .". In 1608 two pieces from our manuscript appear in a volume of miscellaneous Irish collections (Lansdowne 418) originally made by Sir James Ware, and it is said that these were taken from "a small olde booke in parchment called the booke of Rosse or of Waterford", which may be identified with our manuscript, though at that time the latter contained pieces (one of which dealt with Waterford) which have since dropped out. It was at one time rearranged, not very successfully, as can be inferred from its curious paging (see Heuser, pp. 7, 8).

We next meet with a lengthy reference to our manuscript

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in Bernard, *Catalogi librorum manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae*, printed at Oxford in 1697. In his appendix he gives a table of the *principal* items in a manuscript (No. 784) which then belonged to John Moore, Bishop of Norwich (consecrated 1691; translated to Ely 1707); and as this table agrees, as far as it goes, in subject and in paging with our manuscript there can be no doubt that the volume now classed as Harley 913 was then in the possession of Bishop Moore. Thomas Tanner (afterwards Bishop of St Asaph's), who was chaplain and son-in-law to Moore, gives a reference in his *Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica* to the poem by Michael of Kildare, and says that he extracted it from MS 784 belonging to Bishop Moore; but Hickes in his *Thesaurus* (1705) prints a poem, *The Land of Cokaygne*, from a manuscript which he says was lent to him by Bishop Tanner. As this manuscript of Moore's is to be identified with our manuscript it would appear that Tanner had borrowed it from Moore, and had not returned it before that prelate's death. Moore's library was purchased by George I, and given to the University of Cambridge, but this particular manuscript with which we are dealing passed in some unknown way into the library of the Earl of Oxford, and has at length found a resting-place in the British Museum.*

At one stage in its career the manuscript was known as "The Book of Ross or of Waterford". Perhaps the following explanation of this curious title may be suggested. It would have been known as the book of *Ross*, not because it had any connection with New Ross, but because it contained the poem which described the entrenching of that town; while it would have been styled the book of *Waterford*, because it originally contained a long poem addressed to the young men of that city, and because it may have passed in some way from its supposed home at Kildare to Waterford. It is to be presumed that it was as a result of the dissolution of the

* Heuser, pp. 3, 4, 8-10; Jessopp, *The Diocese of Norwich* (S.P.C.K.), pp. 215 ff., 242; Crofton Croker, *Popular Songs of Ireland*, p. 283.

monasteries that it came into the hands of the Wyse family, where it was assured of a welcome, as amongst the members of that family at that period were some who were distinguished for their literary taste, and who composed verse. But there appears to be no means of ascertaining how it passed from thence into the possession of Bishop Moore.

In our efforts to collect what remains of Anglo-Irish literature it is plain that the contents of such a manuscript as Harley 913 must be handled with caution. Of some of the pieces in it one can say with certainty that they were composed in Ireland by Anglo-Irish writers. With regard to others, there is a considerable degree of probability that such is the case. And if we seem to labour the point overmuch in the pages of this book, at all events it must be admitted that it is of extreme importance to ascertain, with as great a degree of certainty as possible, what pieces were actually composed, and what pieces were merely copied, in Ireland. It is uncertain whether the irreverent parodistic pieces in Latin were brought to Ireland by a Goliard (a wandering scholar), or composed there by such a writer. Possibly the first supposition is nearer the truth, as pieces closely akin to them are found in England and on the Continent.*

After this digression we must continue our survey of the subject. It has been said that "no single considerable piece of prose or verse came out of the English colony". The writer of those words (Professor Curtis, in *Studies*) is thinking of the great pieces of literature composed in the English language in England; and, regarded from that point of view, his statement is correct. Yet, considering the state of the country, and the smallness of the English population, it must be acknowledged that *Cokaygne*, the Kildare poems (as they are loosely termed), and Yonge's *Secreta* are not "inconsiderable". Besides, much must have perished. Had everything

* See Lehmann, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1922), and his Appendix, *Parodistische Texte* (Munich, 1923). On p. 59 of the latter he prints the *Missa de Potatoribus* from our manuscript.

survived we should have had at least one cycle of mystery plays (Kilkenny), and presumably another and a much longer one for Dublin. Furthermore, if we include the other two languages, Norman-French and Latin, as we are entitled to do, we must admit that what remains is by no means inconsiderable, and not without its influence on English and French thinkers.

It is remarkable, indeed, how much Anglo-Irish literature in the three languages comes to us, in entire pieces or in fragments, from the fourteenth century. At this period it seems to have flowered freely, and to have borne many-coloured blossoms, yet this flowering was but a sign of approaching decay. French did not last long as a literary vehicle, and even as early as the middle of that century English was losing ground. This was due, partly to the revival of the native race, and the consequent spread of their language, partly to the Hibernicisation of the Norman lords, and the migration back to England of the small tenantry who could not endure the oppression of the magnates.* The English language was being confined to the Pale; consequently it does not surprise us to find that the fifteenth century has only left a few pieces in that tongue, such as the versions of the *Conquest of Ireland*, and Yonge's translation of the *Secreta Secretorum*, though it is probable that the religious drama, the mystery plays, of which no examples survive, came into existence towards the close of that period. The same is true of the sixteenth century; what survives is connected with Dublin and Waterford.

If from this point we take a retrospective glance, we begin to realise how much Anglo-Irish literature has been lost. Ware's lists, and more especially those of Stanihurst in his *Description of Ireland*, contain names of writers whose works have completely disappeared. A consideration of what remains leads us to the same conclusion. The total output of the *trouvères* must have been more than two long poems. The

* Curtis, in *Studies*, pp. 239, 240, 244.

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Franciscan House at Kildare cannot have been the only monastery that collected and read pieces in the three languages. It is known that the Dominicans in Waterford possessed a library at their dissolution in the sixteenth century. Kilkenny can hardly have had the monopoly of dainty ditties and mournful love songs. Even though the English tongue was then confined to a small portion of the country, James Yonge was surely not the only writer of his century. Much has been lost—in a country that seems fated to lose its records, let us at least be thankful that so much has survived!

It makes us realise, too, that Ireland did not adopt an insular attitude, but that there was a considerable amount of literary intercourse between it, England, and the Continent. Some of the writers certainly came in from outside. They tell us so themselves, e.g. in the last stanza of the de Bermingham ballad. Besides composing in the country they brought pieces with them and transcribed these into the manuscript volumes which they found in the monasteries, and elsewhere, with the result that one manuscript of Irish origin (Harley 913) contains unique or very early copies of poems which, though written down in Ireland, have not the characteristics of the Anglo-Irish dialect. On the other hand, men, Irish-born and Irish-reared, went to other countries, taking their literary talents with them. Such a one was Jofroi of Waterford, whose writings had a marked influence on medieval thought in France. It should not be forgotten, too, that Richard Stanihurst, born and reared in Dublin, a member of a family closely connected with the civic life of that city, and educated at Kilkenny, published his volume of translations and poems at Leyden in 1582.

No scholar appears to have devoted himself to a systematic study of the peculiarities of the English literary dialect in Ireland between the years 1300 and 1600, to take round dates. This is to be regretted, as much material for the subject remains, not merely in literature proper, but in cor-

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poration records and Acts of Parliament. But a few of its peculiarities may be noticed here. Waterhouse in E.E.T.S. (Ex. Ser. No. 104), pp. xlvii, lxvii, gives as the characteristics of Dublin manuscripts of the fifteenth century the following:

The confusion of *th* with *t* and *d*.

The confusion of *w* with *u* and *v*.

The omission and erroneous insertion of *h*.

Substitution of *t* for final *d*.

Substitution of *sh* for *s*.

Substitution of *ss* for *sh*.

Are not some of these to be found in the Kildare poems? We have there such forms as *fisse* (for *fish*), *schame* (for *shame*), *is* (for *his*), *hit* (for *it*), *ispend* (for *ispent*). Furthermore, in these poems occur peculiar and unusual forms such as *apan* (upon), *throg* (through), *streinth* (strength), *neldes* (needles), *axin* (ashes). Heuser (pp. 56 ff.) considers that the peculiar dialect of English spoken less than a hundred years ago in the Baronies of Forth and Bargy, Co. Wexford, is the direct descendant of the language of the Kildare poems. On this dialect Professor Curtis says (*Studies*, p. 248), "It has been the subject of much conjecture, learned and unlearned, and has often been described as a mainly Flemish speech. But there can be no doubt that it was simply an early form of English derived from the western and south-western counties of England, from which Dublin, the towns, and large parts of the colony were generally populated". Heuser quotes some illustrative parallels:

Apan, *apa* (upon; Kildare *apan*).

Lereke, *lerock* (lark; Kildare *leuerok*).

Neal (needle; Kildare *neld*).

Th'valler (the more; Kildare *fale* = many).

On this dialect Stanihurst has some interesting information in his *Description of Ireland*. He says that in Wexford and Fingall were to be found in this time "dregs of the old

ancient Chaucer English". He gives some of the peculiar words then in use, e.g. *Attercop* (spider); *meanie* (household or folks); *leech* (physician); *eeth* or *eefë* (easy). The words *lech* and *ethë* occur in the Kildare poems. Furthermore, in two-syllable words the speakers put the accent on the last, e.g. *markét*, *baskét*, *Robért*. In order to illustrate the archaic nature of the English spoken in Wexford, he tells the following amusing tale, though we cannot but suspect that our author has dressed it up a little in order to make a good story of it. Not long before he wrote an English nobleman was sent to Wexford to examine some grievances. He listened affably to the peasants making their complaints, and "conceived here and there sometimes a word, other-whiles a whole sentence". At this he was agreeably surprised and pleased, and told one of his followers that "he stood in good hope to become shortly a well-spoken man in the Irish"—he actually supposed that the peasants were addressing him in Gaelic, while in reality they were speaking archaic English!

We may now conclude. This book has been written with the object of giving the ordinary reader a general account of a literature the existence of which he may never have suspected. It does not aim at including all the non-Celtic writers and writings of the period which it covers. To do that would entail much travelling (metaphorically) through arid stretches of theological literature, and much travelling (literally) in search of rare printed books, housed here and there; and perhaps, such work when done would scarcely have been worth the doing. Nothing has been said about the annalists who wrote either in Latin or English. Musical writers, too, are passed over; Dr Grattan Flood has said all there is to be said about them in his *History of Irish Music* (4th edition). We have rather aimed at giving an account of those pieces and fragments which may with justice be termed "literature". We have endeavoured to modernise the spelling of the pieces quoted in such a way as not to spoil

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their rhyme or metre, or to deprive them of their quaint ruggedness of character. For any slips or faults found therein, or for the omissions that are almost inevitable when one is dealing with a subject virtually untouched by previous writers, we crave the reader's indulgence.*

* A valuable study of the English language as spoken and written in Ireland will be found in Jeremiah J. Hogan, *The English Language in Ireland* (Educ. Co. of Ireland, 1927). This little book came into the writer's hands too late for use. P. J. McCall in his *Fenian Nights Entertainments* (Dublin, T. G. O'Donoghue, 1897) has retold some Irish legends in the dialect of Forth and Bargo as it existed in his time, in order to "illustrate the localisms of a district with which he is connected". He alludes to the older dialect, and says that the idioms and words introduced into his tales are perhaps the only remnant of it now existing.

CHAPTER II

"THE SONG OF DERMOT AND THE EARL"

Amongst the Carew MSS preserved at Lambeth Palace is one, classed 596, which contains the unique copy of a poem in Norman-French dealing with the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century. This poem, extending to 3459 lines, is unfortunately fragmentary; a few lines have been lost at the commencement, while it is impossible to say how many are missing at the end. It bears no title, but its latest editor, Mr (now Dr) Goddard Orpen, has given to it that of "The Song of Dermot and the Earl". It is an almost contemporary account of the invasion, and there is every reason to suppose that it was written in Ireland; thus it possesses a twofold value as a historical authority and as a specimen of the French of the period.*

The authorship of this poem has been usually attributed to Morice Regan, the interpreter (latimer) and friend of Dermot McMurrough, King of Leinster, the monarch who was the means of inducing the Anglo-Normans to invade Ireland. But in Dr Orpen's opinion the question of authorship cannot be so easily decided. For the solution of the question we have to rely on the opening words of the poem, the actual commencement of which is lost, while the use of the pronouns is rather obscure.

.
By his own interpreter
Who told to me the story of him
Of which I here make record.
This man was Morice Regan,
Face to face he spoke to him
Who related this geste;
The history of him he shewed me. (ll. 1-7)

* It has been published by the Oxford University Press (1892).

From a study of the foregoing lines, as well as of what Dr Orpen has said, the following theory may be put forward as to the origin of the poem in its present form. Regan, desirous of having the deeds of his lord Dermot and of his overseas allies put into proper literary form, employed a writer, and furnished him with materials, oral or written, or perhaps both. This man ("him who related this geste") put this matter together and produced the poem—"la chanson", "la geste", etc.—which is alluded to several times in *Dermot* as the authority for particular statements. But this may not have been a satisfactory piece of work; at any rate, as it was written at an early date, there were a number of later incidents which needed to be included in it. Amongst the hosts of newcomers there may well have been a professional *trouvère* (the "me" of l. 2, the "I" of l. 3) whose songs would while away the evenings for the knights and soldiers. Regan would have given such a man the existing *chanson* ("the history of him he shewed me") and would have directed him what to do with respect to improving and lengthening it. But this second writer, the author of *Dermot* in its present form, did not rely entirely upon the existing *chanson*; he seems to have drawn on such sources as common report, or the authority of old people; while for some of his material he would have relied on a particular informant, perhaps Regan himself.

Dr Orpen considers that the composition of the poem, in its existing form at least, cannot be placed earlier than the beginning of the thirteenth century, and not later than a little after 1225,* while the pre-existing *chanson* may have been written soon after Strongbow's death in 1176. As Dr Orpen's scholarly edition of the entire poem is available we shall content ourselves with quoting a few distinctive passages.

The poem is written from the point of view of Dermot

* The existing manuscript, however, is a transcript, and is said to date from the last quarter of the thirteenth century.

“THE SONG OF DERMOT AND THE EARL”

McMurrough and his allies. Anything done against that King is treason, but apart from that there is no condemnation of evil deeds. He speaks of that King in high terms of praise throughout the poem.

Del rei dermod vus voil conter.
En yrland, a icel ior,
Ni out reis de tel valur:
Asez esteit manans e richez,
Amale francs, hailes chiches.

About King Dermot I will tell you.
In Ireland, at this day
There was no more worthy king;
Very rich and powerful he was;
He loved the generous, he hated the mean.

(ll. 11-15)

He speaks of him as “the rich king” (a frequently applied epithet), “the powerful”, “the potent”, “the valiant”, “the noble”, “of the bold heart”; and after the notice of his death there comes the long line, written in red paint, in French and Latin,

King Dermot is dead. May God have mercy on his soul!

The writer tells us without a qualm that Dermot was only making a pretence of loving Dervorgil, the wife of Tiernan O'Rourke, his real motive being a desire for revenge, while she loved him dearly.

Dermot, king of Leinster,
Whom this lady loved so much,
Made pretence to her of loving,
While he did not love her at all,
But only wished to the utmost of his power
To avenge, if he could, the great shame
Which the men of Leath-Cuinn wrought of old
On the men of Leath-Mogha in his territory.
Often did the king send word
That she was altogether, in truth,
The thing in the world he most loved.

(ll. 40-7; 51-3)

“THE SONG OF DERMOT AND THE EARL”

Turlough O’Conor, King of Connaught, and overlord of Ireland (who died in 1156), drew away from Dermot the allegiance of his under-kings and tributaries. Amongst those who “joined in the treason” was

Murrough O’Brien, an evil rebel,
Whom the dogs devoured,
As the song will tell you. (ll. 140–2)

This man’s name, according to Dr Orpen, was O’Brain, and he was a member of the family that gave its name to the barony of Shellbourne in Co. Wexford. Dermot desired to have a secret parley with him in the hope of bringing him back to his allegiance, but “O’Brien” took pains to avoid meeting him. The King’s vain attempt to approach him in disguise is amusingly told. He went to the Abbot of Ferns, and requested him

That he should lend him a cope,
A cope for a canon
Or for a priest or for a monk.
To Knoth [Murrough?] then the king goes
This time with the cope.
At a *dun* of his he found him,
As it was related to me.
The king put on the cope
Which trailed down to his feet,
So that one could not but take him
For a Monk Regular.
When the Palmer [Dermot] had come
Before the traitor’s house,
The rebel, when he saw the king, straightway
Hurried off towards the forest;
For the wicked traitor
Did not wish to recognise him as his lord.
The rebel then shouts
In a loud and strong voice:
“Wicked king, what do you seek?
Be off with you at my bidding;
And if you do not do so speedily,
I shall have you strung up to the wind”. (ll. 171–93)

“THE SONG OF DERMOT AND THE EARL”

Dermot took his revenge, however, for this grievous insult some years later, for “O’Brien” was captured in August, 1171, and handed over to Strongbow.

To the earl [Strongbow] they then delivered him,
O’Brien the convicted traitor.
Because the rebel had betrayed
Dermot his rightful lord,
The earl had him beheaded,
And his body then thrown to the hounds.
The dogs wholly devoured him
And ate up his flesh. (ll. 2169-76)

When Dermot was expelled from Ireland in 1166 he went to seek aid from Henry II. His plea for help to that King is thus versified by our poet:

May God who dwells on high
Save and guard you, King Henry,
And give you also
Heart and courage and will
To avenge my shame and my misfortune
That my own people have brought upon me!
Hear, noble King Henry,
Whence I was born, of what country.
Of Ireland I was born a lord,
In Ireland acknowledged king;
But wrongfully my own people
Have cast me out of my kingdom.
To you I come to make plaint, good sire,
In the presence of the barons of your empire.
Your liege-man I shall become
Henceforth all the days of my life,
On condition that you’re my helper
So that I do not lose at all;
You I shall acknowledge as sire and lord
In the presence of your barons and earls. (ll. 272-91)

The first batch of invaders landed at Bannow on May 1st, 1169, under Robert FitzStephen. The account of this incident is simply told by our poet. He could not see its full significance. But when we bear in mind how fraught with fate

“THE SONG OF DERMOT AND THE EARL”

for Ireland this was, the language thrills us with its very simplicity.

About three hundred crossed over,
Knights and common folk besides.
At Bannow they landed
With all their men.
When they had landed
And all had disembarked,
They made their men encamp
On the sea-shore.
The English folk sent word
To King Dermot by messenger
That at Bannow with three ships
They had at that time landed,
And that the king should speedily
Come there without delay. (ll. 459-72)

Just a year later Raymond le Gros landed at Dundonuil (supposed to be Drumdowney near Wexford), and built a fort. He plundered the district, and brought away a good spoil of cows. Then he was attacked by a large body of Irish under O'Phelan of the Decies and O'Ryan of Odrone; the assailants numbered three or four thousand, while Raymond's party did not consist of more than a hundred men. By Raymond's advice the cattle were driven into the fort. Then he addressed his men as follows:

Sir barons, hearken to me.
You see your enemies coming
Who have resolved to attack you.
It is more honourable for you here
Than within to be killed or taken.
Come now, do you all arm yourselves,
Knights, sergeants, and archers;
Thus we shall place ourselves in open field
In the name of the Almighty Father. (ll. 1435-43)

The cows were driven out first, in order to break up the enemy ranks, and then Raymond and his little band sallied forth, and inflicted a severe defeat on the Irish, killing many, and scattering the remainder in all directions. But this

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well-won victory was sullied by an act of cruelty. Seventy of the Irish were taken prisoner,

But the noble knights
Had them beheaded.
To a wench they gave
An axe of tempered steel,
And she beheaded them all
And then flung their bodies over the cliff,
Because she had that day
Lost her lover in the combat.
Alice of Abervenny was her name
Who served the Irish thus.
In order to disgrace the Irish
The knights did this. (ll. 1476-87)

The account given by Giraldus Cambrensis differs from this, and indeed he has confused this fight with the subsequent capture of Waterford. He says that Raymond wanted to spare their lives and hold them to ransom; while Hervey de Montmaurice counselled their death. The latter's counsel prevailed; the wretched men had their limbs broken, and were cast headlong into the sea and drowned. He also says that towards the close of the fight the victors pushed vast numbers from the cliff's edge into the water. So his account is very confused and puzzling. The horrible deed is strongly condemned by him, for he says that “the English abused their good fortune by evil and detestable counsels and inhuman cruelty”. He tells us nothing of the woman's action; she was evidently a camp-follower, who had lost her lover in the fray. Thomas Bray, in his English version of the *Conquest* (to be alluded to hereafter), says that as the English had no gallows they hurled their seventy prisoners over the cliff, and drowned them: the *Book of Howth* has the same.

Cambrensis gives us vividly drawn word portraits of the principal actors in the Invasion. Our *trouvère* contents himself with a sketch of Philip de Prendergast, evidently drawn from life and penned by one who may have had close experience of the varying moods of the worthy soldier:

“THE SONG OF DERMOT AND THE EARL”

This man was such, know ye all,
That in the morning he was peevish and irritable,
But after eating, generous and good tempered,
Courteous and liberal to all.
As soon as he had put on his cloak
He was every day swoln with anger:
But once he had dined in the morning
There was not a merrier soul under heaven.

(ll. 3044-51)

The poem ends with the assault on the city of Limerick in 1175 by Raymond le Gros and the King of Ossory:

This city was surrounded
By a river, a wall, and a dyke,
So that no man could pass over
Without a ship or a bridge,
Neither in winter nor in summer,
Except by a difficult ford. (ll. 3418-23)

The first to cross was Meiler FitzHenry. Invoking, as was his wont, his patron St David, he threw himself into the river, and his white horse bore him safely across.

After him there crossed over
Many barons and knights well armed.
Before they had all crossed over
Many were drowned that day. (ll. 3456-9)

Here the poem breaks off abruptly before it describes the taking of the city.

CHAPTER III

“THE ENTRENCHMENT OF NEW ROSS”

In MS Harley 913 is a poem in Norman-French entitled *Rithmus facture Ville de Rosse*, which describes the building of a wall, or rather the digging of a trench and mound, round the town of New Ross, Co. Wexford. This poem was copied into another British Museum manuscript (Lansdowne 418), a volume of miscellaneous Irish collections originally made by Sir James Ware, and taken from Harley 913 when the latter contained more pieces than it does now.

The town of New Ross, Rosponde, *Villa novi pontis*, or *la novele Vile*, as it was variously called, would appear to have been founded by Isabel de Clare, only child of Strongbow, who married William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, in 1189, and not by the Earl personally. From a notice in the year 1210 it would appear that it was then a *villa* or Anglo-Norman town, and that it was linked to the other side of the river and to the road to Kilkenny by a newly made bridge, hence the name Rosponde. At that time, and indeed down to a very much later period, as bridges were not numerous, the existence of such a structure would ensure the prosperity of the town at which it was situated. Furthermore, New Ross was founded on the bank of a great tidal river which served as a valuable waterway up into the heart of Leinster, and thus it speedily became an important town with a shipping trade which at one period surpassed that of the great port of Waterford.

Towards the close of 1264 a quarrel broke out between Walter de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, and Maurice FitzMaurice, who represented the Geraldines in Connaught. This seems to have been due to mutual jealousy of each other's power. On account of the disturbances caused thereby in the

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country the citizens of New Ross determined to build a wall round the town in order to protect it. This work was commenced in 1265, and the story of the preliminary work has been preserved for us in the Norman-French poem alluded to above, which comes from the pen of a professional *trouvère*, who speaks as an eye-witness, and who appears to have written while the ramparts were still incomplete. One would gather from the poem that no wall of stone and mortar was actually erected at the time, and that all co-operated in the unskilled labour of digging a trench. But the walls seem to have been completed by 1279, and no doubt followed the lines of the trench, of which some traces remain. Although this sprightly piece has been printed more than once, yet it may be given here in full, as it will be new to the generality of readers.*

I have a whim to speak in verse, If you will list what I rehearse, For an unheeded tale, I wisse, Not worth a clove of garlic is. Please you then to understand,	5
'Tis of a town in Ireland, For its size the one most fair That I know of anywhere. But the town had cause of dread In the feud two barons spread;	10
Sir Maurice and Sir Walter—see, Here their names shall written be; Also the fair city's name— Ross they then did call the same.	
'Tis the new bridge-town of Ross, Which no walls did then inclose; It therefore feared a stranger's blows. Commons both, and leading men, Gathered in the council then,	15

* G. H. Orpen, *New Ross in the Thirteenth Century* (Dublin University Press, 1911), pp. 4, 7, 8, 9, 17; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, III, p. 241. The poem has been printed in Crofton Croker, *Popular Songs of Ireland*, p. 277, in the *Waterford Archaeological Journal*, vol. 1, and in Gilbert's account of the Facsimiles of Nat. MSS of Ireland, Part III. The text is in *Archæologia*, vol. XXXII.

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What for safety to devise, 20
In shortest time and lowest price:
'Twas that round the town be thrown
Walls of mortar and of stone.
For this war filled them with fear;
Much they dreaded broil so near. 25
Candlemas, it was the day
They began to delve in clay,
Marking out a fosse, to shew
Where the future wall should go.

Soon 'twas traced, and then were hired 30
Workmen, all the task desired.
More than a hundred workmen ply
Daily, 'neath the townsmen's eye;
Yet small advance these fellows made,
Though to labour they were paid. 35
So the council met again;
Such a law as they passed then!
Such a law might not be found
Nor on French nor English ground.
Next day a summons, read aloud, 40
Gathered speedily a crowd;
When the law proclaimed they hear
'Twas received with many a cheer.
Then a good man did advance,
And explained the ordinance, 45
Vintners, drapers, merchants, all
Were to labour at the wall,
From the early morning time
Till the day was in its prime.
More than a thousand men, I say, 50
Went to the goodly work each day.

Monday they began their labours,
Gay with banners, flutes, and tabors;
Soon as the noon-hour was come,
These good people hastened home, 55
With their banners proudly borne.
Then the youths advanced in turn,
And the town they made it ring
With their merry carolling;
Singing loud, and full of mirth, 60
Away they go to shovel earth.

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And the priests, when Mass was chanted,
 In the fosse they dug and panted;
 Quicker, harder, worked each brother,
 Harder far than any other; 65
 For both young and old did feel
 Great and strong, with body zeal.
 Mariners came next, and they
 Passed along in fair array,
 With their banner borne before, 70
 Which a painted vessel bore.
 Full six hundred were they then;
 But full eleven hundred men
 Would have gathered by the wall
 If they had attended all. 75

Tuesday came coat-makers, tailors,
 Fullers, cloth-dyers, and saddlers;
 Right good hands, these jolly blades,
 Were they counted at their trades.
 Away they worked like those before, 80
 Though the others numbered more;
 Scarce four hundred did they stand,
 But they were a worthy band.

Wednesday following down there came
 Other bands, who worked the same; 85
 Butchers, cordwainers, and tanners,
 Bearing each their separate banners,
 Painted as might appertain
 To their craft, and 'mid the train
 Many a brave bachelor; 90
 Small and great, when numbered o'er,
 Singing as they worked their song,
 Just three hundred were they strong.

Thursday came the fishermen,
 And the hucksters followed them, 95
 Who sell corn and fish; they bear
 Divers banners, for they were
 Full four hundred; and the crowd
 Carolled and sung aloud.
 Scabbard-makers,* they came too— 100

* So Dr Orpen suggests for *waynpayns*, instead of “wainwrights”.

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They were only thirty-two;
A single banner went before,
Which a fish and platter bore.

And the——* came on Friday,
Hundreds three and fifty were they; 105
And their banners in array
On the ditch make brave display.

But on Saturday the stir
Of blacksmith, mason, carpenter,
Hundreds three with fifty told, 110
Many were they, true and bold;
And they toiled with main and might,
Needful knew they 'twas, and right.

Then on Sunday there came down
All the dames of that brave town; 115
Know, good labourers were they,
But their numbers none may say.
On the ramparts there were thrown
By their fair hands many a stone;
Who had there a gazer been 120
Many a beauty might have seen.
Many a scarlet mantle too,
Or of green or russet hue;
Many a fair cloak had they,
And robes dight with colours gay. 125
In all lands where I have been
Such fair dames working I've not seen.
He who had to choose the power
Had been born in lucky hour.
Many a banner was displayed 130
While the work the ladies did.

When their gentle hands had done
Piling up rude heaps of stone,
Then they walked the fosse along,
Singing sweet a cheerful song; 135
And returning to the town,
All these rich dames there sat down:
Where, with mirth, and wine, and song,

* The name of the trade that worked on Friday is illegible in the manuscript. Miss Stone, in a letter to the writer, suggests "porters".

Passed the pleasant hours along.	
Then they said a gate they'd make,	140
Called the ladies', for their sake,	
And their prison there should be;	
Whoso entered, straightway he	
Should forego his liberty.	
Lucky doom I wean is his	145
Who a lady's prisoner is;	
Light the fetters are to wear	
Of a lady kind and fair.	
But of them enough is said,	
Turn we to the fosse instead.	150
Twenty feet that fosse is deep,	
And a league in length doth creep.	
When the noble work is done	
Watchmen then there needeth none;	
All may sleep in peace and quiet,	155
Without fear of evil riot.	
Fifty thousand might attack,	
And yet turn them bootless back.	
Warlike stores there are enough	
Bold assailants to rebuff.	160

The poet then enumerates these, as well as the different classes of soldiers that comprise the garrison. There are numerous hauberks and haubergeons (short hauberks or coats of mail), parpoints (quilted tunics), aketons (a variety of the last), swords, crossbows, quarrels or bolts for the same, maces, shields, and talevaces (large wooden shields with pointed ends). In the town there are, too, many wild kern (*savage garsun*), twelve hundred archers, three hundred and sixty-three cross-bowmen, three thousand men armed with lances and battle-axes, and a hundred and four horsemen.

I warrant you the town's prepared	
'Gainst all enemies to guard.	180
Here I deem it meet to say	
No desire for war have they,	
But to keep their city free,	
Blamed of no man can they be.	
When the wall is carried round	185

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None in Ireland will be found
 Bold enough to dare to fight.
 Let a foeman come in sight,
 If the city horn twice sound,
 Every burgess will be found 190
 Eager in the warlike labour,
 Striving to outdo his neighbour.
 God grant them the victory!
 Say Amen for charity.

In no other isle is known 195
 Such a hospitable town;
 Joyfully the people greet
 Every stranger in their street.
 Free is he to sell and buy,
 And sustain no tax thereby. 200
 Town and people once again
 I commend to God—Amen.

Ce fut fet lan del incarnation nostre Seigneur m.c.c.l.xv.

Richard Stanihurst, the historian and poet, writing about 1577, assigns the enclosure of the town to a different cause. Its lying open rendered the inhabitants liable to attacks from the Irish, while one particular and trifling incident so incensed the citizens that there and then they determined to build a wall in order thereby to prevent a recurrence of such.

There repaired one of the Irish to this town on horseback, and espying a piece of cloth on a merchant's stall took hold thereof, and beat the cloth to the lowest price he could. As the merchant and he stood dodging one another in cheapening the ware, the horseman considering that he was well mounted, and that the merchant and he had grown to a price, made wise as though he would have drawn to his purse to have defrayed the money. The cloth in the meanwhile being tucked up and placed before him, he gave the spur to his horse and ran away with the cloth, being not imbarred from his posting pace, by reason the town was not perclosed either with ditch or wall. The townsmen being pinched at the heart that one rascal in such scornful wise should give them the slampaine [play a trick], not so much weighing the slenderness of the loss, as the shamefulness of the foil, they put their heads together, consulting how to prevent either the sudden rushing or the post-haste flying, of any such adventurous rakehell hereafter.

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The plan of building a wall, according to Stanihurst, was suggested to the citizens by “a famous Dido, a chaste widow, a politic dame, a bountiful gentlewoman, called Rose, who represented in sincerity of life the sweetness of that herb whose name she bare”, and who offered moreover to pay the greater part of the cost. The townspeople jumped at the offer, and all willingly lent a helping hand at the work of fortification. “For the noble town was assembled, tag and rag, cut and long tail; none exempted, but such as were bed-ridden and impotent. Some were tasked to delve, others appointed with mattocks to dig, divers allotted to the unheaping of rubbish, many bestowed to the carriage of stones, sundry occupied in tempering of mortar, the better sort busied in overseeing the workmen, each one according to his vocation employed”. The work was speedily finished to the great chagrin of the Irish. A writer of about a century later than Stanihurst tells us that New Ross “was reported to have been built by a lady called Ross, who was daughter to Crune, King of Denmark, and to whom that place and a large territory thereunto adjoined did then belong. It is called in Irish Rosse-Macrune, from the foundress”.

From the point of view of historical accuracy we prefer the account of the Anglo-Norman *trouvère*. It seems a pity to spoil a good story, but it is to be feared that Stanihurst’s “famous Dido”, Rose, is the offspring of a *volksetymologie* rather than of a King of Denmark! For the Irish name for New Ross is *Ros mic Triuin*, and this name, through aspiration of the *t*, would be pronounced *Rosmicrune*, out of which some enterprising philologist evolved the story.*

In the fourteenth century, for different reasons, New Ross decayed. The Four Masters record that in 1394 it was burnt by Art McMurrough, King of Leinster, who took a goodly store of plunder from it. And as there was a poet to sing the rise of the town so there was also found one to sing its decay, though unfortunately his work has not been preserved. Ware

* Orpen, *New Ross*, pp. 19, 26; Stanihurst, quoted by Croker, p. 279.

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tells us that there was a certain Dormer, a civilian, who was born at New Ross, and became a student at Oxford in the sixteenth century; he wrote in ballad-royal *The Decay of Ross*.*

* Orpen, *New Ross*, p. 10; Harris's Ware's *Writers of Ireland*, p. 95.

CHAPTER IV

SOME EARLY PROSE WRITINGS

Little known, yet worthy of being rescued from comparative oblivion, is the learned Irish Dominican who came from Waterford, and who worked and translated in France in the latter half of the thirteenth century, JOFROI, or GODFROI OF WATERFORD, who describes himself in one of his works as “de l'ordre az frères precheors le mendre”. From his writings, three of which have come down to us, it is inferred that he was acquainted with Greek, Latin, Arabic, and French: he appears to have been in the East, presumably having been sent there on some mission, while he lived for a long period in France, staying at Paris for some time. Only one manuscript of his works is extant; from a passage in it we learn that he came from Waterford, but, apart from that, it affords us no information as to the date of his birth, or the circumstances of his life. This manuscript is now preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and is numbered 1822; besides the three works of Jofroi it contains other pieces which were once supposed to be his, but this is now known not to be the case. And if we are ignorant of the facts of Jofroi's life, we are also ignorant of the date of his death, though it has been supposed that it took place about 1300.

Jofroi's literary remains consist of three works translated by him into French, namely: (1) a translation of the *Secreta Secretorum*, erroneously attributed to Aristotle; (2) a translation of the book of the Trojan Wars, by Dares Phrygius; and (3) a translation of the history of the Romans by Eutropius. Of these, the most important and interesting is the translation of the *Secreta Secretorum*, the more so as Jofroi's work was used in the fifteenth century by another Irish writer, James Yonge. It appears that Jofroi undertook

this work at the request of an unnamed nobleman, who had no doubt acted as his friend and benefactor. In his work he says to his patron:

Whereas sometimes you provide yourself with arms, and other implements necessary for war, sometimes you entertain yourself in reading of books—wherefore to other good books which you already have, you desire to add a book called *The Secrets of Secrets* of the most wise philosopher Aristotle, and for this end you have requested me, that I would for your sake translate the said work from Latin into French, which I had already translated from Greek into Arabic, and again from Arabic into Latin. Being overcome by your entreaties, I have taken care to fulfil this task, and have used more pains in it than I am accustomed to do in my more deep and profound studies. You are further to understand that I have added many other things which, though they are not contained in that book, yet are drawn from other authentic books, and are no less profitable than what is written in that treatise; these things that are added being pertinent to the subject in hand.

From this it can be seen that though Jofroi left the name of Aristotle at the head of his book, yet he did not scruple to lend him many ideas incompatible with Greek philosophy, or to quote, on one and the same page, St Bernard, Vegetius, and Solomon. Thus his work is a free translation to which is added matter from other sources. Gaston Paris, in his *Histoire littéraire de la France* (1905), says of him, "Le traducteur a beaucoup interpolé son texte, qu'il dit rédiger d'après l'arabe et le grec, et il y a inséré des renseignements de première main souvent intéressants".

We shall now turn to some of the points of interest in the *Secreta*. If Jofroi sometimes added matter, at other times he omitted when he considered it right to do so. Thus in the portion dealing with advice about health are to be found some extraordinary recipes, one of which he omits because he considers it indecent. Again, in the chapter dealing with methods of warfare, he omits the passage which recommends the poisoning of the wells from which the enemy will drink.

The question of good health leads him on to make minute observations on wine, where he discusses in due order its age, colour, taste, and bouquet. One chapter is devoted to a list of the best vineyards.

As is to be expected, he includes the description of many marvels. He tells of a wonderful stone which is to be found in the Greek Sea; it floats on the surface, and if anyone finds this stone, and always keeps it on his person, he can never be defeated by his enemies. Jofroi then asks, Why was Alexander the Great sometimes defeated, for surely his master Aristotle must have communicated this valuable piece of information to him? This, and other points, raise doubts in Jofroi's mind as to whether Aristotle wrote the entire work.

In the chapter on Justice, amongst other pieces of advice to princes, he warns them not to put confidence in men of another law, i.e. of a different religion to themselves. This, says the writer, makes for intolerance, but a story subsequently related encourages men to help all who suffer, irrespective of their religion. Once a philosopher and a Jew were journeying together; the philosopher rode on a mule, and carried with him plenty of food and drink, while the Jew travelled on foot, and had no provisions. The philosopher asked the Jew of his law. The latter replied, "It is to believe in a God Who will recompense me and my brethren, and Who allows me to rob and kill all who do not believe in my God". "My law", answered the philosopher, "teaches me to benefit, not only myself and my friends, but all mankind". "If that be so", retorted the Jew, "then give me food, and let me ride on your mule!" The philosopher did so, and no sooner had the Jew mounted the animal than he galloped off, leaving the philosopher to struggle along as best he could. After some time, he found the Jew, who had fallen off the mule, lying insensible on the roadside, with his head all cut and bleeding. The philosopher immediately raised him up, set him behind him on the mule, and brought him to his own home, where he died shortly after. But when the king

heard this, he made the philosopher his first councillor, on account of the pity he had shewn, and the excellency of his law.

The work concludes with a treatise on Physiognomy, intended for the use of princes who would wish to learn how to know their subjects. Jofroi was assisted in his translation by one Servais Copale, who also helped in the other two works. V. le Clerc (*Hist. litt.* t. xxi) says that in the translator, Jofroi, we can see a man educated and industrious, seeking everywhere for materials wherewith to combat the ignorance of the times, invoking the authority of a name (Aristotle) then more than ever respected, and adding to his work from Greek, Latin, and Arabic texts. Langlois, in his *La Vie en France au Moyen Age*, t. iii, shews that the scientific knowledge at the disposal of intelligent laymen in France from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries was derived from many sources, not the least important of which was the *Secreta* of Jofroi, the Dominican from Waterford.

Of his two other works, namely, the translation of Eutropius, and of Dares Phrygius, little need be written. Le Clerc says of them both that the style is correct and concise, and very worthy of admiration in a foreigner. Jofroi worked on the original uninterpolated recension of Eutropius, copies of which are not common, for which reason his work might have a critical value for future editors of that author. Jofroi has been credited, too, with a translation of Dares into French verse, but this ascription is incorrect.*

Two manuals which were intended for the use of unlearned preachers may be given a brief notice here. The first is entitled *Liber Exemplorum*, and was compiled by an Englishman, apparently from Warwickshire, who was a member of the Franciscan Order, and spent many years in Ireland. He was an inmate of the Dublin House about 1256-7, and was at one time Lector at Cork.

* *Histoire littéraire de la France*, xxi, pp. 216-29; Orpen, *The Song of Dermot and the Earl*, p. xxix; Harris's Ware's *Writers of Ireland*, p. 75; *Hermathena*, xvi, p. 69.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part treats "Of things above", and in this the subjects are treated in order of precedence, viz. Christ, the Virgin, Angels, etc. The second part treats "Of things below", and here the subjects are dealt with in alphabetical order, stopping with M. He relates several anecdotes, supernatural and otherwise, of people in Ireland, giving names of persons and places.* Amongst the works used by him was a book by BROTHER JOHN OF KILKENNY; this appears to be otherwise unknown, but it may have been a book of Exempla.

The second work is entitled *De Veneno*, and its author is probably identical with FATHER MALACHY OF LIMERICK. He is said to have been a Doctor of Divinity of Oxford and Chaplain to Edward II. He flourished *circa* 1300. His treatise was printed at Paris in 1518. It is divided into sixteen chapters, and deals with the seven deadly sins—which are compared to poisons—and their remedies. It, too, contains many references to Ireland.†

A very brief sketch must be given of the life and writings of one of the outstanding figures of the century, RICHARD FITZRALPH, Archbishop of Armagh, "Ardmachanus", as he was termed, a profound scholar and theologian, a voluminous writer, an eloquent and much sought-after preacher, a vigorous opponent, and a cleric imbued with the spirit of intense moral earnestness. "Richard of Armagh has the spirit of a Reformer, in the noblest sense; he is a man who fights against modern degeneracy and ecclesiastical abuses with combined wisdom and zeal, with eye uplifted to Christ and with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

He was of the Anglo-Irish, and was born at Dundalk; the date of his birth is uncertain, but it was probably a little before 1300. Like so many Irishmen of that day, he was a student at Oxford, where he subsequently took the degree

* Printed in *British Society of Franciscan Studies*, vol. 1.

† See *English Historical Review*, xxxiii, pp. 359-66. This writer was probably not Anglo-Irish, but we have included him on account of the connection his book has with that mentioned above.

of Doctor of Divinity. He is said to have studied there under Dr John Baconthorpe, an opponent of the Mendicant Orders, and it may be that then the seeds were sown which were destined to germinate many years later. He became a Fellow of Balliol College, and Chancellor of the University about 1333. He was held in high esteem on account of his learning and ability, and ecclesiastical promotion came quickly to him. In 1334 he was collated to the Chancellorship of Lincoln Cathedral, and was made Archdeacon of Chester shortly after. In 1337 he was appointed to the Deanery of Lichfield, and from this position was advanced to the Archbishopric of Armagh, and was consecrated at Exeter in 1347.

He was high in the papal favour, and seems to have made several visits to Avignon, where the Popes then resided; indeed, he may even have lived there for some considerable time, as he preached sermons before the Supreme Pontiff at various dates between 1335 and December, 1342. He was again in Avignon in 1349, in connection with the jubilee that was announced for the following years. This visit was fraught with consequences of more than one kind. It seems probable that it was on this occasion that he was brought into connection with the negotiations that were then going on between the Pope and the Armenian Church. The latter had sought assistance from the Papacy against the attacks of the Mohammedans, and the Pope had laid down the condition that they must abjure their heretical doctrines before help could be given them. Two Armenian prelates visited Rome for further consultation, John, Bishop-elect of Khilat, and his brother Nerses, Archbishop of Melasgerd. FitzRalph took part in the proceedings, being chosen, no doubt, on account of his great learning and ability, and wrote a treatise, *De Quaestionibus Armenorum*, in which he examined and refuted the points in which the Armenians differed from the Catholic Church. This work is in the form of a dialogue; John brings forward questions and objections, with which Richard deals. In this he treats of such matters as the Christological and

Trinitarian doctrines, the primacy of the See of Rome, and the Sacraments.

But FitzRalph's visit to Avignon in 1349 was destined to produce even more important results. He had brought with him a petition to the Pope from the English clergy, in which well-known complaints were lodged against the friars. He himself was not at the time actuated by any unfriendly feelings against them, for he preached in the Franciscan church that year on the festival of St Francis. The Pope appointed a commission to examine into the matter, with no positive results, and FitzRalph was urged to make a personal examination of the question, and write a treatise on it. This was in 1350. Accordingly he commenced a work, his well-known *De Pauperie Salvatoris*, but as he was compelled to return to Ireland to busy himself with the affairs of his diocese, and with other matters, he was unable to finish the book at that time.

He remained in Ireland from 1350 to 1356, and in the latter year quitted the country for the last time. As he was going on matters concerning his diocese, it may be presumed that he had every intention of returning, had not an unexpected set of circumstances arisen which made it impossible for him to do so. When he reached London he found a disputation going on, and took part in it. He tells us himself, "I came in a time to London for certain needs of my church of Armachan and found there wise doctors striving upon the beggary and begging of the Lord our Saviour. And I was often prayed to preach to the people, and I preached seven sermons or eight to the people in their own tongue, with the protestations that I have said and told, therein nine conclusions". These sermons were preached at St Paul's Cross, in English; some of them survive, but in Latin. In these he asserted that voluntary poverty was not taught by Christ, nor was it obligatory on anyone, and that mendicancy had no warrant in Holy Scripture. This aroused the wrath of the friars against him, and they succeeded in having him

summoned to Avignon. On November 8th, 1351, he preached before the Pope his celebrated sermon entitled *Defensio Curatorum*, in which he recapitulated the arguments he had used at St Paul's Cross, and championed the rights of the secular clergy as against the intrusions of the friars. This was delivered in Latin, and of it an English translation made by John Trevisa is extant.

In this work he lays down his nine conclusions, already alluded to. These were: (1) Christ was always poor, but not because He loved poverty for its own sake. (2) He never begged wilfully. (3) He never taught men wilfully to beg. (4) On the other hand, He taught that no man should wilfully beg. (5) No man may prudently and holily determine to take upon himself a life of wilful begging. (6) Wilful begging is not part of the Franciscan Rule. (7) The Bull of Pope Alexander IV does not oppose any of the above conclusions. (8) For the purpose of confession the parish church is more suitable than the church of the friars. (9) For hearing confessions the parish priest is always a more suitable person than a friar.

These conclusions fall into two divisions. The first seven deal with the moral question, whether begging is permitted to men, and whether it be in itself a virtue. He does not attack the Begging Orders on principle, but only seeks that these Orders should be restored to the purity of their original foundation. In the eighth and ninth conclusions he shews that it is much more suitable for a parishioner to go to confession in the parish church, and to one's own parish priest, who is acquainted with the penitent, than to a stranger. He tells us a curious fact about his diocese of Armagh, which illustrates the foregoing.

In it I believe I have two thousand subjects, man-slayers, woman-thieves, incendiaries that set houses afire, and other evil-doers that be accursed by sentence [excommunication] every year, of which scarcely come to me and my penitauuncers [priests appointed to give absolution in extraordinary cases] forty a year;

and such (i.e. the balance of the evil-doers) take the sacraments as other men do; and methinks, that they be assoiled [absolved] and by none other than by friars, without fear, for none other men assoil them.

He accuses the friars of inducing young children to join their Order, which is child-stealing, and should be punished as such. He urges another point against them, which to us seems praiseworthy rather than reprehensible. He says that the friars buy up all the books, both those of physic, of divinity, and of canon and civil law, as well as Bibles, so that they have well-stocked libraries, and all the learning, but as a consequence students find that there are no books for sale. Finally he ends his sermon with the text with which he commenced it. "Demeth nought by the face, but rightful doome ye deme" ("Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment", John vii, 24). As a result FitzRalph's case was entrusted to four cardinals for examination, but we have no means of knowing what results were arrived at; he died at Avignon in 1360, before judgment was given.

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FitzRalph completed his *De Pauperie Salvatoris*, which had been begun in 1350, and is supposed to have been finished before he left Ireland in 1356. This is in seven books, the first four of which have been printed by the Wyclif Society as an appendix to Wyclif's *De Dominio Divino*. In this FitzRalph states the problem to which he seeks a solution: the religious Orders all profess to follow the life and teaching of Christ and His Apostles, yet their Rules differ: the divergence mainly proceeds from the sense they attach to certain terms, "lordship", "property", "possession", and the "right of using", as well as the voluntary surrender of these rights. He sets himself, accordingly, to make a minute examination of the true meanings and senses of these words. In the three other books he deals with the controversy concerning the manner in which the Mendicant Orders could enjoy, if they could not hold, property. This work of FitzRalph's has been

regarded as in many ways an introduction to Wyclif's doctrine of *Dominium*, or lordship, and it had a marked effect on that Reformer's writings; indeed, the latter had a great respect for FitzRalph, and frequently quoted from his books.

Ten years after his death it is said that FitzRalph's bones were brought back to Ireland by Stephen de Valle, Bishop of Meath, and buried in St Nicholas' Church, Dundalk. His canonisation was delayed on account of the miracles that were said to have been wrought at his tomb, to which the people flocked in pilgrimage, but no positive action was taken. Canonised, however, he was, unofficially, like many a saint of the Celtic Church in Ireland, for he was known affectionately as St Richard of Dundalk, while in the mouths of the people the following verse was found:

Many a mile have I gone,
And many did I walk,
But never saw a holier man
Than Richard of Dundalk.*

There were other Irishmen found to follow FitzRalph in his attacks on the Mendicant Orders both with tongue and with pen. HENRY CRUMP, a Cistercian monk of the Abbey of Baltinglass, and a D.D. of Oxford, who flourished *circa* 1382, publicly maintained at Oxford that "the Friars of the four Mendicant Orders neither are, nor were, of divine institution, but were contrary to the General Council of Lateran, held under Pope Innocent III, and that Pope Honorius was by pretended and false dreams prevailed upon by the Friars to confirm them". But he was subsequently compelled to abjure these assertions in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He is said to have written some works, one of which bore the significant title *Contra Religiosos*

* Lechler, *John Wycliffe* (1904, Eng. trans. p. 57); Harris's Ware's *Writers of Ireland*, p. 84; *Dictionary of National Biography*; *Louth Archaeological Journal*, II, No. 1; *British Society of Franciscan Studies*, vol. IX. The first four books of the *De Pauperie* have been printed as an appendix to Wyclif's *De Dominio Divino* (Wyclif Society, 1890). John Trevisa's trans. of the *Defensio Curatorum* is in E.E.T.S. (Or. Ser.), No. 167.

Mendicantes. Another opponent of the Mendicants was PHILIP NORRIS, also a D.D. of Oxford. In 1427 he was appointed to the vicarage of St Nicholas, Dundalk, and received licence to stay abroad for seven years in order to prosecute his studies. During his stay at Oxford he wrote and preached against the Mendicants with such bitterness that in 1431 they complained of him to the Pope, who, it is said, excommunicated him. He returned to Ireland and in 1451 was made Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin. He wrote some works, one of which was entitled *Contra Mendicitatem validam*.*

But the most interesting Latin piece surviving from the fourteenth century is the long account—it occupies forty closely printed pages of the Camden Society's volume—of the proceedings taken in Kilkenny against Dame Alice Kyteler and her associates for witchcraft and heresy by Richard de Ledrede, Bishop of Ossory, and of the consequent troubles incurred by the latter. The original is contained in the British Museum manuscript, Harley 641. It is a contemporary narrative, and therefore of extreme value; it affords an intimate picture of the times and of local doings, while it also furnishes us with an account of one of the earliest instances of witchcraft, and one which, as regards Ireland, contained unique elements.

The writer is unnamed, but was decidedly on the side of De Ledrede. From some of the minute details which he gives, and which seem to come from the pen of an eye-witness, it may be inferred that he was in personal attendance on the Bishop, and may have been one of his chaplains. He is concerned to write his narrative in order to make the Bishop and his actions appear in the best possible light.

Without any prefatory remarks he plunges at once into his story, of which only a very brief outline can be given here. He tells us that in the time of Pope John XXII the following events happened in Ireland. As Richard de Ledrede, Bishop

* Harris's Ware's *Writers*, pp. 86, 89; Leslie, *Armagh Clergy and Parishes*, p. 279.

of Ossory, was making a visitation of his diocese (apparently early in 1324) he found by an Inquisition, which consisted of five knights and many nobles, that there was in the city of Kilkenny a band of heretical sorcerers, headed by Dame Alice Kyteler. The following charges were laid against them:

(1) They used to deny the Christian faith absolutely for a year or a month, according as the object they desired to gain through sorcery was of greater or less importance. During these periods they would not believe in any of the doctrines of the Church; they would not adore the Body of Christ, nor hear Mass, nor make use of consecrated bread or holy water.

(2) They used to offer in sacrifice to demons living animals, which they dismembered, and then distributed at cross-roads to a certain evil spirit of low rank named Son of Art, or Robin Son of Art.

(3) They sought by their sorcery advice and responses from demons.

(4) In their meetings by night they used to imitate the power of the Church in a blasphemous manner by fulminating sentence of excommunication with lighted candles, even against their own husbands, from the sole of their foot to the crown of their head, naming each part expressly, and then concluded by extinguishing the candles, and by crying "Fi! Fi! Fi! Amen".

(5) In order to arouse feelings of love or hatred, or to inflict death or disease on the bodies of the faithful, they made use of powders, unguents, ointments, and candles of fat, which were compounded as follows. They took the entrails of cocks sacrificed to demons, certain horrible worms, various unspecified herbs, dead men's nails, the hair, brains, and shreds of the cerements of unbaptised children, with other abominations, all of which they cooked with various incantations over a fire of oak-logs in a vessel made out of the skull of a decapitated thief.

(6) The children of Dame Alice's four husbands* accused her before the Bishop, and declared publicly that she had killed their fathers by sorcery, and had brought on them such stolidity of their senses that they bequeathed all their wealth to her and her favourite son William Outlawe, to the impoverishment of the other children. They also stated that her present husband, Sir John le Poer, had been reduced to such a condition by sorcery and the use of powders that he had become terribly emaciated, his nails had dropped off, and there was no hair left on his body. No doubt he would have died had he not been warned by a maid-servant of what was happening, in consequence of which he had forcibly possessed himself of his wife's keys, and had opened some chests in which he found a sackful of horrible and detestable things which he transmitted to the Bishop by the hands of two priests.

(7) The said Dame Alice had a certain demon, an incubus, named Robin Son of Art, who had carnal knowledge of her, and from whom she admitted that she had received all her wealth. This incubus made his appearance under various forms, sometimes as a cat, or as a hairy black dog, or in the likeness of a negro,† accompanied by two others, who were larger and taller than he, and of whom one carried an iron rod.

It is probable that other accounts of Dame Alice's evil doings existed besides the one with which we are dealing, for Holinshed in his *Chronicle* says that the sacrifice to the demon consisted of nine red cocks and nine peacocks' eyes. It was said that Dame Alice used to sweep the streets of Kilkenny between compline and twilight, raking all the filth towards the door of her son William Outlawe, the meanwhile uttering

* She was married (1) to William Outlawe, of Kilkenny, banker; (2) to Adam le Blund, of Callan; (3) to Richard de Valle; (4) to Sir John le Poer, alive in 1324.

† In 1578 there were executed in Kilkenny by the "natural law" two witches and a negro. Did some dim recollection of the Kyteler case prejudice the latter's judges against him?

the following charm, which we shall quote again in another connection:

To the house of William my son
Hie all the wealth of Kilkenny town.

On ascertaining the above, the Bishop wrote to the Chancellor of Ireland, Roger Outlawe, for the arrest of the guilty persons. But the Chancellor was influenced by his relative William Outlawe, and Sir Arnold le Poer, Seneschal of Kilkenny, and wrote in reply that a warrant for arrest could not be obtained until a public process of excommunication had been in force for forty days, while Sir Arnold also wrote requesting the Bishop to withdraw the case, or else to ignore it. Finding himself unable to obtain a writ, the Bishop cited the Dame to appear before him; but she ignored his citation, and fled forthwith.

The Bishop excommunicated her, and at the end of the forty days cited her son William on a charge of heresy. Upon this the latter came with Sir Arnold to the Priory of Kells, where De Ledrede was holding a visitation, and besought him not to proceed further in the matter. They talked together for some hours, and finding that he was unable to influence the Bishop, Sir Arnold had recourse to threats, which he speedily put into execution. On the morrow, as the Bishop was going forth to continue his visitation, he was met on the confines of the town of Kells by Stephen le Poer, bailiff of the cantred of Overk, with a posse of armed men, who, very apologetically, shewed him a writ from Sir Arnold ordering him to arrest the Bishop and lodge him in Kilkenny jail.

The Bishop was kept in prison for seventeen days, until the day on which William Outlawe was cited should have passed by. The affair caused tremendous excitement in the city. The diocese became *ipso facto* subject to an interdict; the Bishop desired the Sacrament, and it was brought him in solemn procession by the Dean and Chapter, and all the clergy, both secular and religious, while a Dominican preached to

them and to the laity on the text, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake". William reported this to Sir Arnold, who thereupon ordered that the prisoner should be kept in closer restraint; but on the protestations of the constable of the prison he relaxed this order, and allowed him to have continually with him two Franciscans, two Dominicans, and two chaplains, while all his friends and servants were given free access to him.

In order to trump up a charge against the Bishop, and so give a pretext for his imprisonment, William Outlawe forged a document based on a cancelled one which he found in the archives of the chancery of the liberties of Kilkenny, but the attempt came to nothing. On the eighteenth day Sir Arnold sent by the hands of his uncle the Bishop of Leighlin (Miler le Poer) and the Sheriff of Kilkenny a mandate to the constable of the prison to release his prisoner. The latter refused to go out as if he were a mere felon; but, assuming his pontificals, and accompanied by all the clergy and a throng of people, he made his way to St Canice's Cathedral, where he gave thanks to God. Immediately after he again cited William Outlawe to appear before him, but before the appointed day he himself was summoned to Dublin by the Archbishop's Vicar-General to answer to the quarrel with Sir Arnold, and to explain why he had placed his diocese under an interdict. He excused himself from attending on the plea that the road thither passed through the lands of Sir Arnold, and that in consequence his life would be in danger. The excuse was not accepted, and the Vicar-General relaxed the interdict.

On the Monday following the octave of Easter (April 23rd), 1324, Sir Arnold, the Seneschal, was holding his court in Kilkenny, to which the Bishop sought entrance, which was denied him. Undeterred by this, or by the threats which were offered to him at the door by some of the Seneschal's supporters, he entered the hall bearing the Sacrament in a golden vase, and accompanied by his clergy carrying lighted

candles. The Seneschal, however, had him ejected; but at the entreaty of some of the nobles he was at last induced to allow him to return, though he caused him to stand where the common felons were placed, and spoke of him as "a vile, rustic, interloping monk, carrying dirt in his hands". The Bishop demanded from him the aid of the secular power for the arrest of the guilty individuals, repeating aloud this demand three times in English and in French, the two languages which we know from the fragments of love songs preserved in the Red Book of Ossory were spoken in Kilkenny at this period. The Seneschal refused his request, and the Bishop withdrew.

Immediately after, the Bishop was summoned to Dublin at the instigation of Dame Alice to answer for having excommunicated her. He had to travel by side roads, not along the "king's way", as an ambush awaited him there. At the time Parliament was sitting; he found all opposed to him, and a wordy quarrel sprang up between him and Sir Arnold, the latter threatening to trounce him on his way home. However, his firm attitude turned many in his favour, though they feared to say anything on account of the great power wielded by Sir Arnold. The Dean of St Patrick's, who was the Archbishop's Vicar-General, advised that peace should be made between the Bishop and the Seneschal, and for this purpose summoned four of the prelates then present in the Parliament to examine the matter. When the Bishop told them of his imprisonment, they would scarcely believe him until he produced the warrant for his arrest, sealed by Sir Arnold, which he had received from the bailiff of Overk. This turned the tide in the Bishop's favour, and Sir Arnold, apparently because he saw the trend affairs were taking, humbled himself before his adversary, and sought pardon. This was granted, and in the presence of all they gave each other the kiss of peace.

Dame Alice was in Dublin at this time, and the Bishop sought to get a writ for her arrest, but she succeeded in

escaping, apparently with the connivance of persons in authority, and so disappears from the story altogether. However, he succeeded in having some of her associates arrested and lodged in jail. Their names were: Robert of Bristol, a clerk; John Galrussyn, Ellen Galrussyn, Syssock Galrussyn, William Payn de Boly, Alice the wife of Henry Faber, Annota Lange, Eva de Brownestown, Petronilla of Meath, and her daughter Sarah. On his return from Dublin he went at once to the prison and questioned them, first swearing them on the Gospels. They all immediately confessed to the charges laid against them, and even went to the length of admitting other crimes of which no mention had been made; but they insisted that Dame Alice was the mother and mistress of them all.

Upon this the Bishop wrote letters on June 6th to the Chancellor and to the Treasurer, requesting them to issue an order to the Sheriff to attach the bodies of these people and put them in safe custody. But a warrant was refused, owing to the fact that William Outlawe was a relation of the Chancellor and a friend of the Treasurer; so at length the Bishop obtained it from the Justiciary, who also promised to deal with the case when he came to the city of Kilkenny.

But before his arrival the Bishop summoned William Outlawe to answer in St Mary's Church in Kilkenny. The latter appeared before him and the Bishop of Lismore with a band of men armed to the teeth, while the Bishop and his party were unarmed; but in no way overawed by this show of force De Ledrede formally accused him of heresy, of favouring, receiving, and defending heretics, as well as of usury, perjury, adultery, clericide and excommunications—in all, thirty-four heads were urged against him, and he was permitted to respond on the arrival of the Justiciary. When the latter reached Kilkenny, accompanied by the Chancellor, the Treasurer, and the King's Council, the Bishop, in their presence recited the charges against the absent Dame Alice, and with the common consent of the lawyers present declared

her to be a sorceress, magician, and heretic, and demanded that she should be handed over to the secular arm (which was never done) and have her goods and chattels confiscated as well. We learn from Friar Clyn's Annals that this took place on July 2nd. On the same day the Bishop caused a great fire to be lit in the middle of the town, in which he burnt the sackful of magical stock-in-trade, consisting of powders, ointments, human nails, hair, herbs, worms, and other abominations which he had received from Sir John le Poer.

The Bishop had subsequently a considerable amount of trouble with William Outlawe, who was supported by the Chancellor and the Treasurer. Suffice it to say that at length, in the Church of St Mary, he compelled him to confess on his bended knees to the articles alleged against him. Thereupon the Bishop adjudged that he should be cast into prison, which the Justiciary ordered to be done. This punishment was remitted on condition that William heard at least three Masses a day for a twelvemonth, that he fed a certain number of the poor, and that he covered with lead within the next four years the entire cathedral (St Canice's) from the belfry eastward with the chapel of the Blessed Virgin. He agreed to do this, but it does not appear that he ever carried out his agreement. Further trouble arose with him, and additional heavy penances were laid upon him.

One of the persons arrested on the charge of witchcraft was very severely dealt with. This was Petronilla of Meath. The Bishop had her flogged six times, and as a result of the repeated application of this form of torture she made her confession. She admitted that she had denied the Faith, and that she had sacrificed three times to the demon named Robin Son of Art. On each of these occasions the sacrifice consisted of three cocks which were bled, and torn to pieces, at a place where four roads met; from their intestines, from the herb called milfoil, and from spiders and other abominations concoctions were made, as already stated, by means of which

she afflicted the bodies of the faithful, and also caused some women to appear as if they had goats' horns on their heads. She confessed to many other things which have been already narrated, and said that at the instigation of Dame Alice she had frequently consulted demons and received responses from them, and that she had acted as a "medium" between the Dame and the demon. She declared that although she herself was mistress of the Black Art, yet she was as nothing in comparison with the Dame, from whom she had learnt all her knowledge, and that there was no one in the world more skilful in sorcery than she. Holinshed and Camden seem to have drawn upon other accounts of the affair which are not now forthcoming, for they tell us, what the anonymous writer does not, that Petronilla declared that William Outlawe deserved death as much as she, for he was privy to their sorceries; and for a year and a day had worn the devil's girdle next his skin. The former writer tells us, too, that when the Dame's house was rifled there was found in a closet "a wafer of sacramental bread, having the devil's name stamped thereon instead of Jesus Christ's, and a pipe of ointment, wherewith she greased a staff, upon which she ambled and galloped through thick and thin, when and in what manner she listed".

The Sacrament of Penance was offered to Petronilla, but she publicly refused it, whereupon she was sentenced to the stake, and the execution was carried out, on November 3rd, according to Friar Clyn's Annals, in the presence of a vast concourse of people in Kilkenny.

The writer then gives us a general account of the fate meted out to the rank and file.

With regard to the other heretics and sorcerers who belonged to the pestilential society of Robin Son of Art, the order of law being preserved, some of them were publicly burnt to death; others, confessing their crimes in the presence of all the people, in an upper garment, were marked back and front with a cross, as was the custom; others were solemnly whipped through the town and market-place; others were banished from the city and diocese;

others who evaded the jurisdiction of the Church were excommunicated; while others again fled in fear, and were never heard of after. And thus that most foul brood was scattered and destroyed.

At first sight this would seem to be only a repetition, in vaguely general language, of what has been already narrated. But a closer examination shews that this cannot be the case. Twelve persons were mentioned by name in the Bishop's letters as being guilty; of these one (Petronilla) was burnt, two (Dame Alice, and Petronilla's daughter) had fled (according to Camden), one (William Outlawe) was in prison. This leaves only eight to be dealt with, and it seems certain that the passage quoted above refers to more than eight persons. Rather we must suppose that the Bishop, having been successful in executing Petronilla, was encouraged thereby to prosecute a witchcraft and heresy hunt, in the course of which some unfortunates suffered the extreme penalty by fire, while to others, who appeared less guilty in his eyes, lighter punishments were accorded.

The anonymous writer abruptly concludes his vividly told narrative with the general passage quoted above. Of the remainder of De Ledrede's stormy episcopate, of the many charges brought against him from time to time, and of his appeals to the Pope, he tells us nothing; and from his silence it may be inferred that he wrote his narrative of the Kyteler affair, which only covers nine months or so, about the end of 1324.

The whole affair was a very complicated one, and the most that can be done in the present work is to indicate the course of some of the threads of which the tangled skein was composed. To begin with, there was bitter personal enmity between De Ledrede and le Poer, which may have been accentuated by their being on different sides in the quarrels that had arisen between the great Anglo-Irish lords. We also see in it something of the age-long struggle for supremacy between Church and State. Furthermore, the Outlawes were

wealthy bankers and moneylenders, and their great wealth may have tempted the Bishop to attack them, and perhaps through them to wound his enemy le Poer and his party. Lastly, the charge of heresy and sorcery seems to have been well founded. It would appear, from scattered entries, that part of Ireland was invaded at this period by a wave of heresy, which manifested itself under a twofold form: (1) a denial of the doctrines and discipline of the Church; (2) the practice of sorcery, or, as Miss M. A. Murray would have us believe, in her *Witch-cult in Western Europe*, of a definite religion, which she names the Dianic cult, with its "god" or "devil", its ritual, and its organisation. Admitting the truth of the last, and viewing the affair from the standpoint of the fourteenth century, it must be conceded that De Ledrede's attitude was not entirely wrong. But we must resist the temptation of saying more on this fascinating subject.*

* T. Wright, *Narrative of the proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler* (Camden Society); Seymour, *Irish Witchcraft and Demonology*, pp. 25-51; *Transactions of the Ossory Archaeological Society*, 1, p. 213; Carrigan, *History of the Diocese of Ossory*, 1, p. 45; M. A. Murray, *op. cit.*; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, pp. 218, 225; *British Society of Franciscan Studies*, vol. IX.

CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS POEMS

In this chapter we shall deal with poems of a purely religious nature. For the most part they are in English, and are contained in the British Museum manuscript known as Harley 913.* A certain FRIAR MICHAEL OF KILDARE has been assumed to be the author of this entire manuscript. This opinion cannot be sustained; the different handwritings, and more specially the varied nature of the contents, are sufficient to forbid it. Nor can it be said that he was even the author of all the English ones. One, and one only, can with certainty be ascribed to him, as his name appears in the last stanza. The metre of this poem is unique, according to Heuser; the rhymes are *aaabababab*, the *a*-verses having four stresses, the *b*-verses three, while the seventh and ninth verses in each stanza are leonine, i.e. the first half of the line rhymes with the second half (this is not true of 11, 7). We shall give this poem in its entirety, and then see what can be deduced with respect to its author.†

"SWEET JESUS"

1. Sweet Jesus, hend and free¹,
 That was istrawgt on roodē tree²,
 Now and ever with us be,
 And us shield from sin.
 Let thou not to hellē te³
 They that be herein!
 So bright of ble⁴, Thou hear me,
 Hope of all mankyn⁵,
 Do us isee⁶ the Trinity,
 And heavenriche⁷ to win.

¹ Gracious and noble. ² Stretched on the cross. ³ Draw to.

⁴ Countenance. ⁵ Mankind. ⁶ Grant us to see.

⁷ The kingdom of Heaven.

* Ed. W. Heuser (*Bonner Beiträge*, Band xrv).

† Heuser, p. 79.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

- 2 This world's love is gone away
 As dew on grass in summer's day,
 Few there be, well-a-way,
 That love God His lore.
 All we be iclung so clai¹
 We should rue that sore;
 Prince and king, what think they
 To live evermore?
 Leave your play, and cry aye
 "Jesu Christ, thine ore²!"

¹ So shrunk up, as clay. ² Thy compassion.

3. Alas, alas! ye rich men,
 With muck why will ye fill your den?
 Think ye to bear it henne¹?
 Nay, so may I thrive!
 Ye shall see that all is fenne²,
 The chattels of this life.
 To Christ ye run and fall on kneen
 That woundës tholëd³ five;
 For ye be trenne worthy to brenne⁴
 In bitter hellë kive⁵.

¹ Hence. ² Dirt, dung. ³ Suffered.

⁴ Trees worthy to burn. ⁵ Vat; here, pit of hell.

4. God you hath to earth isent,
 Little dwel¹ you hath ilent,
 He shall know how it is spent,
 I rede² you, take heed.
 If it be hid, ye be ischent³,
 For hellë worth your meed⁴.
 The bow is bent, the fire itent⁵,
 To you, if ye be gnedë⁶;
 But⁷ ye amend, ye shall be wend⁸
 In ever-glowing glede⁹.

¹ Space of time. ² Counsel. ³ Ruined.

⁴ Hell is your merited reward. ⁵ Kindled. ⁶ Stingy.

⁷ Except. ⁸ Sent to. ⁹ Red-hot coals.

5. Poor was thine incoming,
 So shall be thine outgoing;
 Thou shalt not of all thy thing¹
 A penny bear to mould².

¹ Property.

² Earth, i.e. the grave.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

That is a rueful tiding
Whoso hear it would.
Lord King, to hori ding³
What maketh man so hold⁴?
In pining give a farthing
He shall not, though he would⁵.

³ Filthy dung. ⁴ Friendly. ⁵ In the pains (of hell) he will not be able to give a farthing (in charity), even if he would.

6. Rich man, bethink thee!
Take good heedē, what thou be.
Thou art not but a brotil¹ tree
Of shortē seven foot,
Ischrid² without with gold and fee³—
The axe is at the root;
The fiend unfree⁴ halt all to glee⁵
This tree adown to root.
So might I thee⁶, I rede thee "Flee!
And do thy soul its bote⁷".

¹ Unstable, worthless. ² Clothed. ³ Money.
⁴ Base. ⁵ Takes a delight in. ⁶ As I may prosper.
⁷ Apply the remedy to thy soul.

7. Now thou art in ro¹ and rest,
Of all the land thou art the mest²,
Thou dost no strength of God's behest,
Of death why wilt thou not think?
When thou thinkest to live best
Thy body Death shall quench.
The poor chest³ shall be thy nest
That sittest bold on bench;
East and west shall be thy quest,
And mightest thou nothing blench⁴.

¹ Ease. ² The most important. ³ The coffin.
⁴ Flinch from, turn aside from.

8. Be thou baron other¹ knight,
Thou shalt be a sorrowful wight,
When thou liest on bier itight²
In fullē poor weed³;
Thou hast neither main⁴ nor might,
Whilst thou no man will dread;

¹ Or. ² Arrayed. ³ Garment, i.e. shroud.
⁴ Strength.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

With sorrowful sight—and that is right—
To earth men shall thee lead⁵;
Then shall thy light turn into night—
Bethink thee, this I rede.

⁵ Carry.

9. The poor man begs each day
Good of thee, and thou sayest aye,
“Beggar, go to the devil away!
Thou deafenest all mine ear”.
Hunger-bitten¹ he goeth away
With many a sorrowful tear.
A welaway! thou clod of clay!
When thou liest on thy bier
Of fow nor gray nor red nor ray
Hast thou but a hair².

¹ Famished.

² Of thy variegated and grey fur, of thy red and striped cloth, thou hast nothing left but a shroud of hair-cloth.

10. Christ telleth in holy writ
That a man of withir wit¹
Iburied was in hellë pit,
That in this life was rich;
Shall he never then flit
From that sorrowful ditch.
He shall sit in hellë flitte²
Without wine and miche³;
The fiend shall sit, his knot to knit⁴,
Sore may he screech.

¹ Evil disposition.

² Strife and quarrelling.

³ Small loaf.

⁴ To settle his future fate for him as if tying it up in a knot.

11. The poor man goeth before thee
All idried up as a tree,
And crieth “Lord, help me,
Hunger hath me ibound.
Let me die *pour charité*
Ibrought I am to ground¹”.
So might I thee and Christ isee,
If he die that stund
His life shall be icraved of thee²
Though thou give him no wound.

¹ I am utterly ruined.

² As I may prosper and see Christ, if he dies that time you will be held responsible for his life.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

12. I thee rede—rise and wake
 From the filthy sin's lake¹.
 If thou be therein itake²
 Iwis³ thou shalt to hell,
 To dwell with the fiendës black
 In that sorrowful well.
 Thy way thou make, thou dri the stake⁴,
 To priest thy sinnës tell;
 So woe and wrake⁵ shall from thee rake⁶,
 With fiendës grim and fell.

¹ Pit or prison. ² Taken. ³ Truly. ⁴ Endure the
 accusation of guilt (or penance?). ⁵ Punishment. ⁶ Depart.

13. If in sin thy life is led
 To do penance be not sad;
 Whoso doeth, he is not mad,
 As Holy Church us teacheth;
 Thereof be thou not adradde¹,
 Christ shall be thy leech²,
 Thus Christ us radde³, that rood spradde⁴,
 With a blissful speech.
 When He so bade, thou mightest be glad,
 And loveth He no wreche⁵.

¹ Afraid. ² Physician. ³ Counsellor.
⁴ That was stretched on the cross. ⁵ Vengeance.

14. Jesu, King of heaven free¹,
 Ever iblessed mayest thou be!
 Lord, I beseech thee,
 To me thou take heed².
 From deadly sin thou keep me
 While I live on lede³.
 The maid free that bare thee
 So sweetly under weed⁴
 Do us to see the Trinity—
 All we have the need.

Noble. ² Take care of me. ³ Amongst men. ⁴ Garments.

15. This song wrought a friar []
 Jesus Christ be his succour,
 Lord, bring him to the tower,
 Friar Michael Kildare;
 Shield him from hellë bower

When he shall from hence fare!
 Lady, flower of all honour,
 Cast away his care;
 From the schour¹ of painës sure
 Thou shield him here and there! Amen.

¹ Onslaught.

What can be learnt of Friar Michael of Kildare from this poem, his undoubted handiwork? It would almost seem as if a conspiracy had been entered into with the object of hiding his identity. For there is a marked erasure at the end of the first line of the fifteenth stanza; both rhyme and rhythm demand that that line should end with a two-syllable word, and one which, we may assume, would have told us to which order of friars he belonged. Heuser has suggested *menour* (minor), though *prechour* (preacher) would suit the need equally well. But, having regard to the fact that the manuscript has Franciscan connections, and that the sentiments of the poem are such as would be found in the mouth of a spiritual son of St Francis, one may supply as the missing word *menour*, and thus mark him as a Franciscan. So it may be said of him that he was a member of that Order, living and writing in the Gray Abbey at Kildare at the commencement of the fourteenth century, a serious-minded man, ever ready to champion the rights of the poor as against the oppression or neglect of the rich. Withal he was a good versifier, and could fit his words and lines together with no mean skill. Would that we could attribute to him with certainty other poems in the manuscript!*

Next come four pieces, respectively entitled *A Sermon, Fifteen Signs of the Day of Judgment, The Fall and Passion, and The Ten Commandments*. These four are all connected with each other by style, language, and metre; Heuser has little doubt but that all four were not merely written down, but composed in Ireland, and that the scribe and author may be sought for in the hypothetical home of our manuscript,

* The identification of Michael Bernardi (f. 27 of manuscript) with Michael of Kildare is highly improbable (Heuser, p. 17).

namely, the Franciscan Monastery at Kildare. The first and third appear to be original compositions (though they are by no means without parallel in English literature of the period); the second and fourth are free treatments of themes frequently written on. Heuser thinks, too, that the homely and somewhat uncouth style which is put into the mouth of the preacher in the *Sermon* would suit a mendicant friar. Unlike so many medieval writers, he says nothing at all about hell, but lays great stress on the bliss of heaven, especially, be it noted, on its spiritual side.

Wells (p. 275) dates the *Sermon* "probably the end of the thirteenth century". Does it come from the pen of Friar Michael? It may. Some of the sentiments in it find parallels in *Sweet Jesus*, e.g. the folly of hoarding up, and of grudging to give in charity, what must be left behind; the condemnation of the rich man; the entrance of man into this world, and his exit therefrom, in poverty; an account must be rendered of this world's goods, etc. In both poems are found bold and striking figures of speech which arrest the attention of the reader. Whoever wrote the *Sermon* also wrote the three poems which follow it—that at least seems established. And if we cannot with certainty claim Friar Michael as the author of these four (though it seems highly probable that he was) at least it may be said that they were written under his influence and inspiration.

"A SERMON"*

The preacher begins with a prayer:

The grace of God and Holy Church,
Through virtue of the Trinity,
Give us grace such works to work
That helpful to our souls may be.

St Bernard warns us that we are made of earth and axen (ashes), and that we must turn to dust. But let a man examine his body, and he will find that all is vile.

* Heuser, p. 85; J. E. Wells, *Manual of Middle-English Writings*, p. 275.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

Man, of thy shoulders and thy side
Thou mightest hunt both louse and flea;
Of such a park I hold no pride,
The deer is naught that thou mightest slay.

Why should a man be proud and vain regarding his body?
The flesh will be food for worms, while the skin is but a
dirt-begrimed sack. This is true of gentle and simple alike.

Sir, whereof is the gentleman
Of any other than of this?
Himself may see, if good he can,
For he shall find that so it is.

Your neighbour was proud and vain—go and look in his
tomb, and what will you find there? No silk, sendal (fine
silk), bise (fine linen), or minever—only worms and stench!

I hold the man to be but a fool that is fond of this world's
goods.

It cometh, it goeth, it is not but dwell¹,
Both dirt, deceit, and vanity.

¹ Illusion.

Spend it well, for if you do not, other men will spend it when
you are gone. Some men are blinded by avarice, and would
rather die than spend what God has entrusted to them. So
they become slaves to their own lusts, for their only thought
day and night is to add to what they have.

The wretches wringit¹ the mok² so fast
Upon themselves they will nought spend;
Yet they shall die at the last,
And to the devil they shall wend.

¹ Squeeze, keep tight hold of. ² Muck, i.e. filthy lucre.

If this be true of the miser, what is to be said of the selfish
rich man? It is as easy to bring a camel into "the neld is ei"
as to bring a rich man to heaven. He must give account at
the Day of Doom. Yea, we must all give account then of our
deeds, and of the manner in which we have spent our time
on earth. All men on that day will tremble when they see

the bleeding wounds of Christ. Many things shall cry out against the sinner.

The spear, the nailës, and the rood
Shall cry "Take wrech¹ of sinful man!"

The earth, the water then shall spread,
Rout and drive all forwode².
"Now, Jesus Christ, we shall be wreкке³
Of sinful man that shed thy blood!"

Both fire and wind loud shall cry,
"Lord, now let us go to,
For I will blow, the fire shall burn
Up sinful man that hath misdo".

¹ Be avenged.

² All madly.

³ Avenged.

Let man repent before that Day, for then it will be too late, and think upon my words: if not, he will rue it full sore. His life is but a shadow; now he is, and now he is not. Does he not realise, the "unseli" (unhappy) man, that he came into this world possessing nothing but his skin, and that he shall leave it with but the same? Why should he be vain of his body—for when the soul leaves it that body will become vile carrion.

Many a man does not want to leave his heir penniless, but

His heir shall fail and bear right nought¹,
And waste the goods well widewhare².

I warn thee, for isold it shall³,
All that thou won here with pain,
A brothin⁴ heir shall waste it all,
And by all others what was thine⁵.

¹ Produce nothing, be unsuccessful. ² Very widely, on all sides.

³ Sold it shall be. ⁴ Dissipated. ⁵ What was yours
shall all belong to others.

Since this world, and all that appertains to it, is nought, let us make good use of what we have; so we shall work God's will, and have heaven as our reward. The bliss and joy of that place no tongue can tell.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

The man that may to heaven come
That sweet solace for to see,
Seven times brighter than the sun
In heaven shall man his soul be.

His body shall be there also,
So fair and strong, ye may believe,
Evil is ever fur him fro¹,
There is no thing that shall him grieve.

For meat nor drink there is no need,
And for no hunger he shall care—
The sight of God shall him feed.
It is right pleasant to dwell there.

There be dwellings many and fale²,
Good and better, take good heed;
The last word bint³ the tale,
Who best may do, best is his meed⁴.

Heaven is high, both long and wide,
Many angels be therein,
Both joy and bliss on each side,
Therein shall dwell good christian man.

The least joy that is therein,
A man shall know his own friend,
His wife, his father, and all his kin,
Of all this joy there is no end.

We shall see Our Lady bright,
So full of love, joy, and bliss,
That from her face shall spring the light
Into our hearts that joy iwis⁵.

The sight of the Trinity,
The greatest joy that may befall,
Both God and Man in majesty,
The High King above us all.

¹ Far from him. ² Numerous. ³ Binds, brings the
tale to a fitting conclusion. ⁴ Reward. ⁵ Truly.

The preacher concludes with the promise of a seven-year
indulgence to all who hear his sermon.

"THE FIFTEEN SIGNS"*

The description of the signs and wonders that would occur on the fifteen days before the end of the world formed a very favourite theme with medieval writers, and is to be found in many manuscripts. Wells, in his *Manual of Middle-English Writings* (p. 328), distinguishes six groups, and holds that our piece belongs to that which he denominates the Old-French group; indeed Heuser has shewn (p. 98) that portions of it are translated direct from a French poem, though our author has dealt somewhat freely with his original.

After the usual prayer, the preacher addresses his audience:

Man and woman, ye ought to take gome¹
 This world its ending how it shall be,
 The wonders that shall come before the Doom,
 That young and old it shall isee.

The fifteen tokens I shall you tell
 As us teacheth Isaie;
 The Holy Ghost him taught full well,
 And he it preached for prophecy.

¹ Heed.

Then he proceeds to relate the signs in order; but the piece is incomplete, as it only gives twelve signs instead of fifteen. Briefly these are as follows:

1st day: The stars become black, and fall to earth. 2nd day: The dead arise. 3rd day: The sun is green and wan, and turns black at midday. 4th day: The sun turns red. 5th day: All creatures tremble, and cry to heaven for mercy. 6th day: Hills, mountains, castles, and towers fall. The trees are up-rooted. 7th day: The trees grow with their branches in the ground, and their roots in the air; they bleed as well. All men die. 8th day: The sea rises up like a wall, and cries to God; then it goes back again. 9th day: The sky cries out for mercy. 10th day: The devils come out of hell and plead for mercy. 11th day: Four winds arise, the rainbow falls, the devils are driven "wolny nulni" back into hell. 12th day:

* Heuser, p. 96.

The four elements cry out for mercy. The writer has forgotten to number the second and tenth day, a form of omission which is also found in his *Ten Commandments*.

“FALL AND PASSION”*

In this striking poem the writer connects the story of the Fall of Man with his Redemption by Christ's death, and thus gives within a compass of 216 lines a *Paradise Lost* and a *Paradise Regained*. The stanzas commencing with lines 169 and 173 seem to be out of their place, and should be connected with those commencing with lines 125 and 129.

After beginning his poem (as he does the preceding ones) with a prayer, the preacher addresses his congregation, and asks for God's grace.

Me to speak, and you to lere¹,
That it be worship², Lord, to thee;
Me to teach, and you to hear,
That helpful to our souls it be.
That I may with much worthing³
Through His might so it fulfil,
To shew you His uprising,
If it be His sweet will.

¹ Learn. ² Honour. ³ Honouring.

All that Christ suffered was not for His own sins, but for thine, O Man.

Lucifer was once a bright angel in heaven, but fell through pride into hell, he and countless others.

Seven days and seven nights,
As ye see that falleth snow,
Out of heaven they alight¹,
And into hell were ithrow².

For the pride of Lucifer
The tenth angel† fell into hell,
And all that to him boxum³ were
Ever in pain they must dwell.

¹ Descended. ² Were cast. ³ Obedient.

* Heuser, p. 106.

† i.e. there were originally ten Orders of angels, of which one Order followed Lucifer in his rebellion.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

In order to fill the gap thus caused in the angelic host God created Adam.

Skill¹, reason and eke² might
He gave Adam in his mode³,
To be steadfast with all right,
And leave the harm, and do the good.

God gave him a great mastery
Of all that was in water and land,
Of paradise all the balye⁴,
When him likēd to his hand.

¹ Discernment. ² Also. ³ Mind. ⁴ Stewardship.

But the devil was seized with envy when he saw that man was to take his place, so he came to tempt Eve.

Why come he rather to Eve
Than he come to Adam?
I shall tell you, sirs, beleve¹,
For woman is lef² ever to man.

Woman may turn man his will
Where she will pilt her to³;
That is the reason and the skill
That the devil come first her to.

¹ Quickly. ² Dear. ³ In whatever direction she wishes.

He told Eve that if she ate the apple she would be "as witty of might and will" as God Himself. But as soon as they had eaten they were cast out of paradise, nevermore to enter it again.

In the vale of Ebron*
His livelihood he must swink sore¹
With sorrow and care and dreri won²
He lived nine hundred years and more.

After his life he had here
Needēs he must go to hell,
For the sin that he did here
There he must abide and dwell.

¹ Toil hard for. ² Dreary misery.

* According to some legends, Adam was buried at Hebron. See Seymour, "The Book of Adam and Eve in Ireland" (*Proc. R.I.A.* xxxvi, sect. C, No. 7).

Men increased and multiplied, but the devil led them all astray, and took them to hell. God sent them Moses and many others, but they would listen neither to prophet nor to law. At length, in order to fulfil prophecy, He sent the angel Gabriel to the Virgin to announce the birth of the Saviour.

Flesh He took of maid Mary,
God and man is kund¹ together;
And that was a great mystery
That the daughter bare the father².

¹ Become of the same kind or nature. ² *Very bad theology!*

After living on earth "thirty winter and somedel mo" He was betrayed and crucified.

He was ibobid and ismitte¹,
And they spat in His face,
They bade Him tell, if He could witte²
Which of them all it was.

They nailēd Him in hands and feet,
As ye may all isee;
For the apple that Adam ate
Death He tholed³ upon the tree.

The wicked men would levē not⁴
That He were fully dead so,
Further with a spear they had Him sought,
And cleft His sweet heart in two.

¹ Struck and smitten.

² Know (Matt. xxvi, 68).

³ Suffered.

⁴ Would not believe.

While He was hanging on the cross His mother and St John stood by. She was overcome with sorrow.

Bitter tears out gan glide,
She thought her heart would break in two.

It was no wonder that she wept
For her sweet Child also;
With nails He was ismitten deep,
With spear they delet¹ Him in two.

¹ Divided.

All her joy was ago²
 When she saw Him die on rood;
 For to weep she had no more
 Than four bitter tears of blood.*
 Who speaketh of deil against that deil³?
 Never such was there none,
 As when that they Him beheld,
 As she made and Saint John.

² Vanished. ³ Who speaks of sorrow in comparison with that sorrow? (cf. Lamentations i, 12).

But there was in the land a certain "knight" named Joseph of Arimathie, who went to Pilate, and begged him to give him the body for burial.

When Pilate had igrant his boon
 Glad enough he was;
 He took that sweet body adown,
 And buried it in a fair place.

But the third day He rose again.

After that He light¹ into hell,
 There all the soulës were iwis²
 All His friendës He brought out all
 Into joy and heaven's bliss.

When in hellë was Saint John³,
 Patriarchs, and other mo⁴,
 It was iseen there escapëd none,
 Prophets that God loved also.

All in hellë were ifast,
 Till Jesus Christ by His might
 Of the pit out He them cast,
 And brought them to heaven's light.

¹ Descended. ² Truly. ³ St John the Baptist. ⁴ More.

Through His death He overcame, and rose again.

Jesus was sure enough
 That said early, "I will right me",
 And answered without woy¹
 "After that death overcome be".

¹ Without making a mistake.

* The Virgin's tears of blood are alluded to in *The Northern Passion*, ll. 1747-50 (E.E.T.S. Or. Ser. Nos. 145 and 147). I owe this reference to Dr Mabel Day.

His disciples were glad to see Him. Then He sent them about the world to preach, and to teach sinful folk.

Thereafter He rose to heaven above,
There joy is that ever lest¹,
And there He shall all us love
In His sweet blissful feast. Amen.

¹ Lasts.

*"THE TEN COMMANDMENTS"**

In the religious literature of the Middle Ages this subject was frequently treated of, either as part of a larger work, or as an independent piece. Heuser (p. 113) draws attention to six published examples of the latter, and to some unpublished ones, two of which he prints in his appendix. He considers, moreover, that the poem here dealt with is the oldest version, and unconnected with the others.

It is such a remarkable piece that it must be quoted almost in full. The preacher begins, as in the three associated pieces, with a prayer, and then lashes out in very striking language against those who commit the terrible sin of swearing by Christ's members. Apparently it was a very common offence in his time, and for that reason he places it in the forefront of his poem.

Man and woman, I rede, be ware
Your great oaths that ye beleve¹,
And, but ye will, God will you not spare,
Both life and catel He will you reve².

It is no wonder forsooth, iwis,
That great wreche³ falleth therefor,
For we leave not of all His limbs
That we have not them forswore.

Man is worse than any hound,
Or he is too wild and wood⁴,
That we should edwite⁵ His worthy⁶ wounds
That He suffered for our good.

¹ Take heed that ye give up your great oaths which ye are so fond of. ² He will deprive you of your life and your property.

³ Vengeance. ⁴ Mad. ⁵ Dishonour. ⁶ Honourable.

* Heuser, p. 113.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

Be aware, whoever will;
All disease and sorrow that ever is,
At the end so find we shall
That for man his sin it is.

I rede that you beware iwis,
Inasmuch as He is man,
When ye swear great oaths
On rood thou putttest Him again.

God commanded Ysay (!) on the hill of Sinai to teach the people, and to give them the Ten Commandments. The first tells us that we should honour and love God, for He it was Who so dearly bought us. But

We do not so,
We love the foul dirt of ground¹,
Alas! wretched ones, why do we so?
It may not hold our life a stund².

Ye be they the devil betaugt³
That believe in more gods than one,
And make gods through witchcraft;
They shall all to the devil be gone.

¹ I.e. the things of this world. ² An hour. ³ Given over to the devil.

The second commandment enjoins the keeping of the Sabbath.

And now on the Sunday opunlich¹
Men hold all their cheping²;
Wonder that God hath not sent wreech³
All upon earth upon mankyn⁴.

¹ Openly. ² Trade and commerce. ³ Vengeance. ⁴ Mankind.

The third commandment bids us honour our parents. But

It happeneth with children that are quede¹
As fareth with bees in hive;
When father giveth them land and lede²
The young will the old out drive.

¹ Evil-dispositioned. ² Land and vassals.

The preacher then enumerates the remaining commandments:

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The fourth: Love thy neighbour as thine own body.
None other than him will¹.
The fifth: keep thee from lechery.
The sixth is: no goods of man thou steal.

The seventh: manslayer do thou not be,
Nor covet nought never a del²,
Though thou be stuter³ than is he,
Neither his wife nor his chattel.

False witness do thou not bear
For to destroy neither poor nor rich;
Sore and bitter the soul shall der⁴
For it benimeth heaven riche⁵.

¹ Have no other feeling towards him. ² Not a bit. ¶ ³ Prouder.

⁴ Soreness and bitterness will injure the soul. ⁵ Deprives one of the kingdom of heaven.

Here we have a curiously free treatment of the subject, and one that departs to a considerable degree from the Biblical version. The order in which the writer deals with the Commandments is as follows: 3 (he gives no number), 1 (which includes 2), 4 (which he calls 2), 5 (3), 7 (5), 8 (6), 6 (7), 10 and 9 (where he gives no number). As his fourth commandment he quotes the words of Christ in Matt. xxii, 39. But this curious method of treatment was not confined to our author. Heuser (pp. 197, 205) quotes two poems on the Commandments, hitherto unpublished, from manuscripts of the fifteenth century, in which a similar inversion of the true order is also found.

"THE SEVEN SINS"*

This theme was also an exceedingly popular one in the religious literature of the Middle Ages. Heuser (p. 116) enumerates thirteen poetical versions known to him, some of which are unpublished, though he considers that our version is older than these, and not closely connected with them. In its metrical form it differs entirely from the poems already dealt with, though, like the preceding four, it is in

* Heuser, p. 116.

the style of a sermon. The piece is put in the mouth of a preacher who is addressing a congregation of young and old, rich and poor, of both sexes. The introductory portion consists of ten stanzas of six lines each; in this, after a prayer for the blessing of God on his discourse so that it may be to the devil's shame and confusion, he turns to his congregation and exhorts them to repent and put their trust in Christ only. Then he commences his subject proper, and in a different metre (rhymed couplets) deals with Pride, Covetousness, and Envy. Before he has finished the last he breaks off, and the remainder of the page in the manuscript is left blank.

3. All we are but meiss and mowe¹,
And of one foul earth isowe²,
Whoso it would understand.
This world's joy is but woe,
This wretched life is but a throw³,
All day it is gond⁴.
5. Cleanse thee of thy misdeed
And learn well thy life to lead
The whilst thou art alive;
To not one friend do thou have trist⁵
But to one Jesus Christ,
To child nor to wife.
6. My dear friends, I you beseech,
Young, old, poor, and rich,
Hearken ye to God His speech!
In the name of God and Saint Marie
Your sinful life to amendie
Today I will you teach.
7. And that He let me so well to speak,
Today the devil his staff to break
And with him so to fight;
Thereto, *par charité*, I you cry⁶
A Pater Noster and Ave Marie
In the name of God Almighty.

¹ Male and female relations, i.e. all men are brothers.

² Sown.

³ Space of time.

⁴ Passing away.

⁵ Trust.

⁶ I beg you for.

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8. That peace that is in God His house
Today be amongst us
Through His holy grace;
That to me give life and good ending,
And to you give good lusting¹
In this very place.

¹ Desire to hear.

I shall now tell you, my friends, of the seven "hevid" (head, principal) sins, and will teach you their names. These are they which deceive man and cause them to lose heaven.

First at Pride I will begin,
For it is head of all sin.

It brought down to hell Lucifer, who was the fairest of all things in heaven, save God. But, O Man, why art thou so proud of thy clothes, linen, woollen, gloves, and shoes? Nothing is thine own but thine own skin.

Thine own schond¹ thou wearest on
That helith² thy flesh and thy bone.
I will that thou it know well
It is but a filthy fell³
That is thine own right weed⁴.

¹ Disgrace. ² Covereth. ³ Skin. ⁴ Real garment.

Leave thy pride, and live according to God's law, so that thou mayest be His son, and be pleasing to Him at the last day. Now I shall deal with Covetousness.

Covetise is that other.
Hearken now, dear brother!
The man that is covetous
Cometh he never to God His house.

He loves this world's goods more than he does God, Who first made him of earth, and then dearly bought him. He will not waste his goods, but will hold fast what he has, and he wishes that no living man were as rich as he. The more he has, the more he tries to have. He cannot sleep lest his "muck" be stolen from him, and he would rather give his

blood to a man than his money. He sits brooding on his muck-heap of gold and silver, and never thinks of death.

When he thinketh to live well
 With death fall adown he shall:
 The devil taketh away his breath,
 Much sorrow then he him doeth.
 For his goods the fiend him derith¹,
 And his soul to hell he ferith²;
 The devil is his executor
 Of his gold and his treasure
 That he so much trusted to—
 See now how he is ago³!
 Therefore, Man, in all wise
 I forbid thee covetise.
 To world's goods have thou no trist⁴;
 It goeth away as doth the mist.
 Here it is, and here it nis⁵,
 All so fareth the world its bliss.
 And be he never so rich,
 When he lieth a cold liche⁶
 If he have an old clout
 He may be exceeding proud,
 Wherewith covered he shall be,
 That no man naked him isee;
 Of what he gathered, and was his—
 Is not this sad, alas! alas!

¹ Injures. ² Brings. ³ Undone. ⁴ Trust. ⁵ Is not. ⁶ Corpse.

The next sin to be considered is Onde (Envy).

The third sin so is Onde
 That now is much in the land.
 World's goods fall unlike,
 And not to each man alike.

Some have to work hard, and yet are in want; others have friends to help them.

After a few more lines the poem stops abruptly, and the rest of the page is blank.

In sentiment, in purpose, and in vocabulary it is closely connected with the four previous poems, while there are some parallels of thought between it and *Sweet Jesus*. It differs

from them all in metre, and, what is more important, in a slight degree in its linguistic forms, e.g. it has *fele* (many), for the more usual form *fale*; *mid* (with) for *with* (though this last is in *Sweet Jesus*); and apparently *schel* (shall) for *schal*. Perhaps too much stress need not be laid on these; and in view of the many points of connection it may be held that the poet who composed the preceding four poems composed this one also. If we may attribute those to the pen of Friar Michael, then the same is true of this piece as well.

"CHRIST ON THE CROSS"*

There is a very striking poem with the above title given by Heuser on p. 128 (see p. 207). The preacher speaks to the sinner, bidding him contemplate the dead Body hanging all torn and wounded on the Rood. Then Christ addresses him, draws his attention to all He has suffered for him, and then invites him to come to his Saviour. We have not included it here, however, for although it is connected by its linguistic forms with the preceding poems, yet its substance and matter seem to have been derived from pieces which were popular in England at the commencement of the fourteenth century.

Written from a very different motive to the foregoing are the religious songs in Latin which are contained in the manuscript known as the Red Book of Ossory, which is preserved in the Episcopal Palace at Kilkenny. These *cantilenae* are generally attributed to RICHARD DE LEDREDE, who was Bishop of Ossory from 1317 to 1360, and of whom much has been said in Chapter IV. As the introduction informs us, they were composed by the Bishop (unnamed) for his vicars choral, his priests, and his clerics, to be sung on the great festivals lest the mouths sanctified to the service of God should be defiled by theatrical, foul, and secular songs (*cantilenis teatralibus*). The singers are enjoined to provide themselves with suitable notes according to the requirements of the words. These songs are sixty in number; fifteen of them

* Heuser, p. 125.

have been printed in their entirety, and the first few lines of the remainder*. To some of them are prefixed a line or two of verse in English or French, on which something will be said in the next chapter.

Some of these songs have a right pleasant swing, as the following selections from No. 9 will shew.

Da, da nobis nunc,
Da nunc corrigere mores,
Virtutum carpere flores:
Da, da nobis nunc.

Da, da nobis nunc,
Da clero volvere libros,
Da populo tangere scyphos:
Da, da nobis nunc.

Da, da nobis nunc,
Da prompte fundere potum,
Da sobrie bibere totum:
Da, da nobis nunc.

Da, da nobis nunc,
Da mestis vim meritorum,
Da lectis regna polorum:
Da, da nobis nunc.

This was evidently written in the metre, and sung to the air, of some well-known and popular song.

Of the pieces printed at full length perhaps the most charming is No. 42, a hymn addressed to the Infant Saviour, in five stanzas. It begins:

Jesu bone, Jesu pie,
Jesu fili flos Mariae,
Circumciscus ista die
Pro nobis mundi miseris.

There is a remarkable poem (No. 28) put into the mouth of Christ, and addressed to Mary Magdalene weeping at the

* One (the first) in Lawlor, "Calendar of L. Ruber of Dio. of Ossory", (*Proc. R.I.A.* xxvii, sect. C, No. 5); eleven, and opening lines of remainder in *Hist. MSS Commission, 10th Report*, appendix, part v, pp. 221, 242-52; the first four in *Facsimiles of National MSS of Ireland*, part iv.

sepulchre (John xx, 11-18), which, be it noted, could be sung to the air of *Jerusalem the Golden*. Did this ever form part of a liturgical play?

Maria, noli flere
 Sepulchro Domini:
 Surrexit enim vere
 Sepultus ab heri.
 Sepulchra patuere
 Testantur angeli.
 Adlata intuere
 Quem vocas Rabboni. *Etc.*

No. 37 is a song on the times. It is addressed to God Who sees all things above and beneath the stars. The Church, which ought to be free, is oppressed. Avarice, fraud, and malice are on the increase. Love and justice have fled the country, and on all sides plundering, arson, and spite prevail. May God, Who judges kings and empires, take us from this present misery to Heaven. Every two lines are followed by the refrain:

Miserans, miserans, parce redemptis.
 Miserando judicans, parce redemptis.

No. 60 is connected with this in thought. You see what the world is. There have been guides to whom flocks were entrusted; overbearing men who pass laws. Where are they now? Because their deeds were done in secret they are lost in darkness. There are many kings who trod the paths of this world. Where are they now?

Carnes et ossa putrescentes
 In delubris;
 Spiritus et animae vultu gementes
 Cum miseris—

while the righteous are in heaven. The sentiments expressed in Nos. 37 and 60 would suit that portion of Bishop de Ledrede's episcopate when he was suffering at the hands of the powerful enemies he had raised up against himself, and may well have been composed at that period.

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Morley in his *English Writers* (III, p. 80) quotes a story from Giraldus Cambrensis, which serves to illustrate the foregoing. A priest of the diocese of Worcester had been listening all night to the refrain of a song which was sung in the dances and singing which had been held in the churchyard on a Saint's day, as was the custom. When he stood next morning at the altar, instead of pronouncing the *Dominus vobiscum*, he chanted in a loud voice, to the scandal of his congregation, the refrain that had haunted him:

Swete lamman, dhin are.

(Sweet mistress, have compassion on me.)

On hearing of this, the Bishop publicly anathematised that song, and forbade it to be sung in his diocese ever after.

CHAPTER VI

SECULAR POEMS

THE following poem,* usually entitled *A Song upon the Times*, belongs rather to this chapter than to the preceding one, as there is nothing specifically religious about it. It may have been written by a layman; at all events it was composed by one who had the deepest sympathy with "the man in the street" who was ground down by oppression and injustice. From the date of the manuscript this piece appears to be concerned with the period after the Scottish invasion, when Ireland was devastated by war, and the great lords were fighting amongst themselves, the "mere" Irish taking every opportunity that offered itself to regain possession of the lands from which they had been driven. At such a period anarchy, lawlessness, corruption, and oppression stalked through the land. We may compare with this poem No. 37 of the Latin songs attributed to De Ledrede, which must have been written about the same period, and which reflects the same state of affairs.

"A SONG UPON THE TIMES"

1. Whoso thinketh upon this careful¹ life
Night and day that we be in,
So much we see of sorrow and strife,
And little there is of world's winne²;
Hate and wrath there is full rife,
And true love is full thin³,
Men that be in highest life
Most icharged⁴ be with sin.

¹ Full of care. ² Joy. ³ Rare. ⁴ Laden.

* Heuser, p. 131.

2. False and evil is this land
 As all day we may isee;
 Therein is both hate and onde¹—
 I ween that ever it so will be;
 Covetise hath the law in hand
 That the truth it may not see,
 Now is master pride and onde;
 Alas, Lord, why suffereth he²?
- ¹ Envy. ² Why does he (i.e. the law) allow it?
3. Would holy church pilt¹ its might,
 And law of land pilt it too,
 Then should covetise and unright²
 Out of the land be ido³.
 Holy church should hold its right
 For no eye or for no love,
 That they should not shew their might
 For lordingen boast that be above⁴,

¹ Put, use. ² Injustice. ³ Banished. ⁴ Holy Church should maintain its right in spite of the boasts of lords who are highly placed, so that they (covetise and unright) should not be able to shew their power.

4. To entredite and amonsi¹
 All those, whatever they may be,
 That lawful men do robbi²,
 Either on land, or on sea,
 And those hoblurs³ namely
 That husband benimeth eri of grund⁴—
 Men should bury them in no church,
 But cast them out as a hound.

¹ To excommunicate and admonish. ² Rob. ³ Retainers bound to maintain a hobby (light horse) for military service. ⁴ That deprive the husbandman of the fruits of the earth.

5. That king's ministers be ischend¹,
 To right and law that should take heed
 And all the land for to amend—
 Of those thieves they take a mede².
 Be the lawful³ man to death ibrought
 And his chattels away ynom⁴,
 Of his death tell they nought⁵
 But of their prey they have some.

¹ Disgraced. ² Bribe. ³ Law-abiding. ⁴ Taken. ⁵ They take no account.

If they can get a bribe they shut their eyes to crime. A beast-fable will shew this. Once the Lion, king of beasts, summoned the Wolf and the Fox before him, as he had heard a report of their evil doings. The "seli" (simple, humble) Ass was also included in the indictment. The Wolf and the Fox took the precaution of sending beforehand presents of the creatures they were accused of having killed, namely, geese, hens, goats, and sheep. The Ass sent nothing, as he deemed himself safe because he ate nothing but grass. But, as a result of their presents, the two culprits got off, while the Ass was condemned and killed.

17. The lawful man shall be ibound
And ido in strong pain¹
And iheld in secure prison
Until that he pay a fine;
And the thief to escape so
That doeth ever against the right—
God take heed thereto
That is all full of might.

¹ Condemned to severe punishment.

18. Thus fareth all the world nuthe¹
As we may all isee,
Both east and west, north and south,
God us help, and the Trinity!
Truth is failēd with fremd and sib²
All so wide as all this land,
And may no man therein live
What through covetise and onde.

¹ Now. ² Both with stranger and with kinsman.

19. Though lawful man would keep his life
In love, in charity, and in peace,
Soon men shall compass his life,
And that in a little res¹.
Pride is master, and Covetise,
The third brother men name Onde;
Night and day they strive iwis²
Lawful men to have their land³.

¹ Space of time. ² Truly. ³ They try to get their land from the law-abiding men.

When earth (man) is placed in earth he goes out of it as poor as he came in, clad in nothing but a sorry garment (his skin). Why should a man be proud of his body, for it turns to carrion when the soul leaves it, and is hidden in the grave.

22. What will men for the soul deal¹?
 Corn nor meal, well thou wost²,
 But very seldom at the meal
 A rough bare trencher, or a crust.

¹ I.e. give alms at a funeral for the repose of the soul. ² Thou knowest.

23. The beggar that the crust shall have
 Most scornfully he looketh thereon,
 Sooth to say, and not to gab¹,
 Right nought he is ipaid upon².
 Then saith the beggar in his mode³
 "This crust is both hard and tough;
 The wretch was hard that ow the good⁴,
 Hard for hard is good enough!

¹ To lie. ² Satisfied with it. ³ Mind. ⁴ Possessed the goods.

24. Much misfortune for him that bid¹
 Pater Noster other² Creed,
 But let him have as he did,
 For of the gift hath he no meed"³.
 I rede, upon no man have thou trust,
 Nor upon none other;
 But deal it with your own fist,
 Trust not to sister nor to brother⁴.

¹ For him that requested. ² Or. ³ Reward. ⁴ The meaning of the stanza is: Even the beggar is not satisfied with what he gets, but rewards the deceased with a curse instead of the prayer that is desired. Give your alms with your own hand, i.e. while you are alive, and don't depend upon your executors or anyone else to give doles for the repose of your soul when you are dead.

25. Honour God and holy church,
 And give to poor that have the need,
 So God His will ye shall work,
 And joy of heaven have to meed.
 To which joy us bring,
 Jesus Christ, Heaven's King. Amen.

There are no indications of place in this poem, but that it deals with Ireland, and not England, is made fairly certain both by its inclusion in Harley 913 and by the fact that it is connected, not merely by linguistic forms, but by subject, too, with three of the poems described in the previous chapter. Portions of it resemble passages in Michael of Kildare's *Sweet Jesus* (1, ll. 7-8 = *Sweet Jesus*, 7, ll. 1-3; 22, l. 4 to end of poem inculcate charity, as in *Sweet Jesus*, 9 to 11). There are also points of resemblance between our poem and the *Sermon*; while 20, ll. 4-8, 21, and 25, ll. 1-4 are almost word for word quotations from the latter. The poem also shews a knowledge of the *Seven Sins*; is it only a coincidence that in two places (2, ll. 5-8, and 19, ll. 5-6) there are grouped together Pride, Covetise, and Onde, the only three sins that are dealt with in the *Seven Sins*? Had the author of our poem read that piece in the unfinished state in which we now have it? At any rate, from the use made of these, one would infer that the poem entitled *A Song upon the Times* is a little later in date than those dealt with in the preceding chapter.

There are in Harley 913, and published by Heuser, four other English poems, respectively entitled *Elde*, *Erthe upon Erthe*, *Lullaby*, and *Five Evil Things*. These we have not included in this book because from their dialect it seems highly probable that these pieces were merely *copied* in Ireland, the originals being brought from elsewhere. It may be noted, however, that the earliest versions of the second and third are those preserved in our manuscript; while the text of *Elde* found therein is unique. To judge from 20, ll. 1-4, the author of *A Song upon the Times* had read *Erthe upon Erthe*.

We must now turn to what is one of the most remarkable poems in the whole collection, namely, the rude ballad made on the death of Peter de Bermingham.* Its unknown author was intensely, nay, savagely, hostile to the native Irish. He laments the death of one who was so unwearying in his persecution of them, and closes his poem with an allusion

* Heuser, p. 158.

to what he must have conceived to have been his hero's best effort, namely, the murder of the O'Conors in 1305.

The subject of the poem, Peter or Piers de Bermingham, was lord of Tethmoy (Totomoye in the poem), a district included in the Baronies of Warrenstown and Coolestown, King's Co. He died in 1308 (April 20th, according to the poem), and was buried in the Franciscan Monastery at Kildare, the presumed home of our manuscript, which fact would explain the inclusion of the piece in it. He was closely associated with one of the persons mentioned in the poem, John FitzThomas Fitzgerald, who was created first Earl of Kildare in 1316, and who died the same year. These two were constantly fighting to repress the incursions of the O'Conors Faly on their lands, and in 1299 Peter de Bermingham was provided with four hundred footmen to aid him to maintain this war which the "Irish felons of Offaly" carried on against him, to repress the malice of the Irish themselves, and to clear their passes. The two other Anglo-Irish magnates mentioned in the poem are Richard de Burgh, the "Red" Earl of Ulster, who died in 1326, and Edmund Butler, Justiciar of Ireland, who died in 1321.*

1. Since Gabriel gan greet
Our lady Mary sweet
That God would in her light,
A thousand year it is,
Three hundred full, iwis,
And over years eight.
2. Then of the eighth year
Take twice ten ifere¹,
That would be twenty full;
Upon the twentieth day
Of April before May
So Death us gan to pull².

¹ Together. ² Did rob.

* Orpen, *Ireland Under the Normans*, IV, pp. 35-7, 213; *Journal of the Galway Arch. and Hist. Society*, IX, pp. 195 ff.

3. He pullēd us of one,
All Ireland maketh moan,
England also as well,
Full well ye wit his name;
Sir Piers de Bermingham.
No need it is to tell.

4. His name it was and is,
I say you full iwis¹,
That up shall arise:
In skin, flesh, and bone
A better knight was none,
Or none of more price².

¹ Full assuredly. ² Of more excellence.

5. Noble warrior he was,
And good castle in place,
On steed there he would ride,
With his spear and shield,
In hard wood and field
No thief him durst abide.

6. They think all on him
With weapon who will win¹,
How good he was to need.
In battle stiff to stand
Iwis his peer was none:
Alas he should be dead!

¹ All those who fight with weapons think on him.

7. All Englishmen that be
Sore may weep his death,
That such a knight should fall:
Those knights each one
Of him may makē moan,
As pervink¹ of them all.

¹ The flower periwinkle. Here used to mean "the flower of knighthood".

8. Pervink he might be,
And that for thingēs three
He usēd oft and lome¹.
That was one of the best,
He let no thief have rest
In no place where he come.
He was frequently accustomed to do.

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9. Another thing also,
To Irishmen he was foe,
That well wide whare¹.
Ever he rode about
With strength to hunt them out
As hunter doth the hare.
¹ On every side.
10. For when they thought best
In the wilderness to have rest,
That no man should them see,
Then he would drive a quest
Anon to their nest
In the place where they would be.
11. From sleep he would them wake,
For terror they would quake,
And try to skulk away.
For the hire of their bed
He took their head to wed¹,
And so he taught them play.
¹ As security.
12. Those Irishmen of the land
They swore and took a hand
The Englishmen to betray;
And said they would kill
As many as I you tell,
All upon a day.
13. The Earl of Ulster,
Sir Edmund the Botiler,
Sir John le fitz Thomas,
Algate all by name¹,
Sir Piers the Bermingham,
This was their compass².

¹ This seems to mean that the conspiracy was against all of them.

² Design.

14. This compasment¹ came out
From knight to knight about,
It was not long ihid.
These knights prayd all
That meschans might them fall²
If 'scape they should therewith.

¹ Plot.

² That misadventure might come to them.

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15. And swore by God His name
To yild the contre pane¹
When they might come to.
And that without let²
To a certain day iset
This thing should be do³.

¹ To pay them back in the same coin. ² Delay. ³ Done.

16. Long ere this day was come
It was forgot by some
That nice be to need¹.
Alas, why should they be ibor²,
Through them this land is ilor³,
To spill⁴ ale and bread.

¹ Are not to be relied on at need. ² Born. ³ Lost. ⁴ Destroy.

17. Sir Piers de Bermingham,
On earnest and agam¹,
This day was in his thought:
He thought orders to make²
What time he might them take,
Of travail it was him nought³.

¹ Whether engaged in business or pleasure. ² He intended to give orders.
³ He did not consider it a trouble.

18. O'Conor that was king
His ketherin¹ he gan bring—
The master hight Gilboie²—
Right at the Trinity³,
When hoodës sold best be,
To Piers in Totomoye.

¹ Kerne (ceithearn). ² The chieftain who was called *Gilla buidhe*.
³ At the feast of the Trinity.

19. And yet of other store
Come Ethe Mac Mal More,
And other fale¹ by name,
Sir Piers lookëd out,
He saw such a rout²
Him thought it was no game³.

¹ Many. ² Throng. ³ Play or sport.

20. Sir Piers saw them come,
He receivēd all and some,
Not one iwarnēd¹ was;
Since hoodēs he let make,
Not one was forsake²,
But all he did them grace.
21. Save one wretch that there was,
He could not read in place,
Nor sing where he came;
He was of Cain his kin,
And he refusēd him,
He went unhooded home.
22. He that this song did¹ make
For Sir Piers his sake,
Well wide hath igo²,
Wide where isought³,
And God's pardon hath brought,
Two hundred days and mo⁴.

¹ Reading *did* for *let*. ² Has travelled far and wide.

³ Has sought on all sides. ⁴ More.

The latter portion of this ballad (stanzas 18–20) has reference to the murder of the O'Conors Faly by Peter de Bermingham in 1305. The Four Masters in their annals under that year record that Murtough O'Connor Faly ("O'Connor that was king"), Maelmore, his kinsman ("Ethe Mac Mal More"), Calvagh O'Connor, with twenty-nine of the nobles of his people (one of whom was named Gilla buidhe) were slain by Sir Pierce Mac Feorais (de Bermingham) in his own castle (Carrick, in Carbury, Co. Kildare) by means of treachery and deceit. In the Complaint of the Nobles of Ireland to Pope John XXII in 1318 this act is alluded to. "The Baron Peter de Bermingham (cut the heads off) his own kinsman Maurice de Santa Croce, and his brother Calvagh, individuals of very high rank, and very much respected amongst us, after having invited them to a banquet on the festival of the most holy Trinity ('right at the Trinity'). On that very day, when the repast was over,

he fell upon them with twenty-four persons of his own gang, and inhumanly butchered them; and afterwards sold their heads to their enemies for a considerable sum". It is recorded in the Justiciary Rolls for the following year that he received £20 for beheading divers felons.

In accordance with the foregoing we shall endeavour to elucidate stanzas 12-20 in the following manner. The Irish had plotted to seize on four prominent English barons, and kill them. This plot was made known to the intended victims, who, in their turn, swore to deal with their foes, and appointed a certain date for that purpose. Long before this day arrived it was forgotten by some of the interested parties, and for this the poet censures them severely. But, whether engaged in business or pleasure, Sir Peter, the unwearied foe of the O'Conors, never forgot it, and concocted a plan which worked out very successfully, from his point of view at least. Something appears to have dropped out of the poem after stanza 17.

What are we to understand by the "hoods" of stanzas 18 and 20? I think it must be intended for a grim jest! Hoods cover the heads—after decapitation each victim's head may have been placed in a basket or a bag, possibly with the object of carrying it to Dublin and displaying it to the members of the government; thus each would have been provided with a hood! There may be, too, an allusion to some remarks made by some of the interested parties in the course of conversation, but of this we can know nothing. But how are we to interpret stanza 21? It may perhaps mean that one of the intended victims escaped, or that the life of one man was intentionally spared in order that he might give an account of the massacre to the O'Conors. Thus he would go home "unhooded", in other words, with his head on his shoulders instead of in a bag! Lines 2 and 3 possibly refer to some incident that occurred at the banquet; here we would have a topical allusion, the meaning of which is quite lost to us.

Something must be said with respect to the dating in stanzas 1 and 2. For the writer of the poem the year 1307 ended on the last day of March. Then from the succeeding year, 1308, he takes twenty days, which brings him to April 20th, the day of de Bermingham's death. The method of dating is peculiar, as far as the present writer is aware, yet nevertheless it can be easily understood.

In MS Harley 913, when it was more complete than it is now, there was to be found a long and rude ballad * of local interest, in which the young men of Waterford are warned to beware of the le Poers or Powers, the powerful Anglo-Norman family that was settled in the district of Decies, and which was apparently as hostile to the respectable citizens of the Maiden City as any "mere" Irish could be. Only one stanza of this ballad was copied into MS Lansdowne 418 out of "a small old book in parchment called the book of Ross or of Waterford"—our Harley 913. The copyist, who apparently had difficulty in reading his text and who seems to have copied it incorrectly, says, "There is in this book a long discourse in metre putting the youth of Waterford in mind of harm taken by the Powers, and wishing them to beware for the time to come. I have written out the first staff only".

Young men of Waterford, learn now to play¹,
 For your mares' ploughs² are led away.
 Secure ye your hanfelis that long have i lei³,
 And fend⁴ yourselves from the Powers that walk by the way,
 I rede⁵,
 For if they take you on and on⁶,
 I swear by Christ and Saint John
 That off goeth your head.

¹ Perhaps it means here "to fight". ² Your teams of mares. ³ Sheaves of corn (M.E. *handfuls*) that have long lain on the lea. Or does the line mean, Scour your (weapons) that have long lain by? ⁴ Defend yourselves.
⁵ I advise you. ⁶ One by one.

There are other poems connected with Waterford. Crofton Croker prints two long ones in his *Popular Songs of Ireland*,

* Heuser, p. 11.

and as these are in consequence easily accessible it will be sufficient to draw the reader's attention to them, and to print a couple of stanzas of each.

He tells us (p. 310) of the origin of one, a metrical epistle to Walter Fitzsimons, Archbishop of Dublin. In 1487 Lambert Simnel was crowned in Dublin, and his backer, the Earl of Kildare, wrote to the Mayor of Waterford ordering him to proclaim the new king, and to aid him in every way. The Mayor not only refused to do this, but summoned the Butlers, the Walshes, and the towns of Carrick, Clonmel, etc., to come to Waterford in defence of the rights of Henry VII. After the King's troops had landed, the Mayor and City of Waterford wrote a long epistle in "rhyme royal" to the Archbishop of Dublin, regretting that the incident had severed the old friendship that had always existed between the two cities, and proving Henry VII's right to the crown of England through his wife. They rebuked the Archbishop for the part he had taken in the rebellion, and exhorted him and the people of Dublin to repent of their wrongdoing.

O ye citizens of that fair city!
 Your progenitors, of blessed memory,
 Were not endureate by no perversity
 Against their king; but they right humbly
 Obeyed, as subjects, well and truly;
 They gave no singular opinion
 Against their king, for none occasion.

O thou archbishop and metropolitan,
 The chief lamp of pastoral dignity,
 Of all this land, for thou in virtue began,
 If thou be cause of this perversity
 That late is fallen against all equity,
 We know it not; but certain we can say,
 Thou keepest silence, and saidst not once nay.

Return once, and forsake this folly,
 If any there be revolvèd in your mind;

Correct yourself, amend it shortly,
 And to your sovereign lord be not unkind;
 The people's tongues no man can bind.
 In such cases they say, now and then,
 The best clerks be not the wisest men.

Forty-four stanzas of dignified doggerel are brought to a conclusion with the following:

Take the matter and leave the ditty, }
 For 'tis a cause of great pity, } quoth James Rice.

Take no disdain }
 You to refrain } to your sovereign lord,
 And to be plain }

Ye may be fain }
 So to attain } with him to accord.
 His grace again }

FINIS.

JOHN BUTLER, *Mayor of Waterford.*

JAMES RICE,

WM. LYNCOLLE.

Croker gives (p. 331) another ballad in the same metre, which he dates, probably correctly, about 1545. It enumerates the various privileges granted by English sovereigns to Waterford. The words which form the refrain to each stanza are an allusion to the city's motto. We give the first and last stanzas.

God of His goodness, praised that He be,
 For the daily increase of thy good fame;
 O pleasant Waterford, thou loyal city,
 That five hundred years received thy name
 Ere the later conquest unto thee came;
 In Ireland deservest to be peerless—
 Quia tu semper intacta manes.

Now God we pray, that Three art in One,
 Preserve his high grace in royal estate;
 And keep this city from division,
 In true allegiance without debate;
 And our hearts in the same to sociate,
 Then Waterford true shall never decrease—
 Quam diu vere intacta manes.

Both these must have been composed locally, and indeed Waterford does not seem to have wanted for poets. Stanishurst, writing not many years later, says, "There liveth one WISE, in Waterford, that maketh (i.e. is a poet) very well in the English", and he particularly mentions "ANDREW WISE, a toward youth, and a good versifier". The surname is now spelt Wyse.

A long drawn out feud existed between Maurice Fitz-Thomas (created first Earl of Desmond in 1329) and Arnold le Poer. The latter jeeringly called FitzThomas a "rhymer"; the sting of the gibe, according to Dr Orpen, lay in the fact that Irish rhymers or bards used their art to incite the native clans to attack the English at every opportunity, and so recover their ancient inheritance. But the gibe would have been rather pointless if there had been no foundation for the nickname. But, as it happens, it would appear that there was such. In our manuscript, Harley 913, is a small piece in Old French, entitled *Proverbia Comitis Desmonie*.* From the date of the manuscript this title must refer to the first Earl, though there is nothing to shew if it actually came from his pen, or was only attributed to him on account of his presumed predilection for writing verse. It runs as follows:

Soule su, simple, e saunz solas,
 Seignury me somount sojourner,
 Si suppris sei de moune solas,
 Sages se deit soul solacer.
 Soule ne solai sojourner,
 Ne solein estre de petit solas.
 Sovereyn se est de se solacer,
 Qe se sent soule e saunz solas.

Alone am I, single, and without solace, my fate (the tyranny of love?) bids me remain; yet though bereft of my joy and comfort, the wise should be content alone. Alone I was not wont to be, nor was I ever wont to be comfortless. But he who feels himself deserted and without solace must needs find consolation in himself.

* Orpen, *Ireland Under the Normans*, IV, p. 223; the poem is printed in Wright, *Reliquiae Antiquae*, II, p. 256.

Immediately preceding this, on the same page of the manuscript, are certain proverbs in French, nearly every word of which commences with the letter F, just as the words in the above piece commence with S. From this similarity of construction it is possible that both may be attributed to the same author.

Folie fet qe en force s'afie;
 Fortune fet force failire;
 Fiaux funt fort folie
 Fere en favelous flatire.
 Fere force fest fiaux fuir,
 Faux fiers fount feble fameler.
 Fausyne fest feble fremir,
 Feie ferme fra fausyn fundre.

Foolish is the man who puts his trust in brute force; fortune makes force to fail: treachery (or loyalty) by fair words can overthrow ill-advised insolence. Brute force puts to flight the treacherous (or the loyal), and violent treacherous men make the weak to die of hunger. Injustice makes the weak to tremble, but firm faith will confound injustice.

In the same manuscript is a curious little piece, entitled *A Rhyme-beginning Fragment*. Heuser (p. 165) considers that the style of it shews the influence of the *Proverbia Comitis Desmonie*, and that both internal and external evidence point to Ireland as its home. It affords an early instance of what is known as "inverse rhyme", i.e. the last word of each line is repeated as the first word of the following line. Love of sin (or of the fair sex!) has brought the poet to care and unhappiness.

Love hath me brought in evil thought,
 Thought I have to blinne;
 Blinne to think it is for nought,
 Nought is love of sin.

Sin me hath in care ibrought,
 Brought in much unwinne;
 Winne to weld I had ithought,
 Thought is that I am in.

In me is care, how I shall fare,
 Fare I will and funde;
 Funde I with outen are,
 Ere I be brought to ground.

The following appears to be the meaning of this difficult little poem:

Love has brought me into wrong thoughts. I have intended to cease, but it is useless to think to cease; love of sin is nothing. Sin has brought me into care, into much distress; I had thought to possess joy, but it is perplexity that I am in. I am in care how I shall fare; I shall go and depart; I go without honour till I be brought to ground (perish).

Gerald, the fourth Earl of Desmond, who died in 1398, was also a poet, and it is probable that some confusion exists between him and his predecessor. But he was one of the Anglo-Irish who composed in Gaelic, and so is outside the scope of this work. He is described as "a witty and ingenious composer of Irish poetry, and a learned and profound chronicler". Eight of his poems are preserved in the Scottish "Book of the Dean of Lismore".*

No doubt there must have been poets in Ireland in the sixteenth century in imitation of those who were so numerous in England, but of them very little is known. For this reason we owe a debt of gratitude to Richard Stanihurst, not merely for having given us his own strangely contrived poems—of which more will be said elsewhere—but for having preserved for us as well a touching little poem,† every line of which breathes sincerity and true contrition. The poem in question is entitled *A Penitent Sonnet*, and was written by GERALD, Baron of Offaly, and son to the eleventh Earl of Kildare, who died in 1580 before he was quite twenty-one. Evidently he had been much addicted to swearing and dicing, two common vices of the age.

By loss in play men oft forget
 The duty they do owe

* Sigerson, *Bards of the Gael and Gall* (2nd ed.), pp. 224, 419.

† Stanihurst's poems (ed. Arber), p. 153.

To Him that did bestow the same,
 And thousand millions mo.
 I loathe to see them swear and stare,
 When they the main have lost;
 Forgetting all the byes that were
 With God and Holy Ghost.
 By "wounds" and "nails" they think to win,
 But truly it is not so:
 For all their frets and fumes in sin
 They moneyless must go.
 There is no wight that used it more
 Than he that wrote this verse;
 Who crieth Peccavi, now therefore
 His oaths his heart doth pierce.
 Therefore example take by me,
 That curse the luckless time
 That ever dice mine eyes did see,
 Which bred in me this crime.
 Pardon me for that is past,
 I will offend no more,
 In this most vile and sinful cast
 Which I will still abhor.

Stanihurst, who himself wrote a poem on the death of the young lord of Offaly, tells us that he was a man full of good qualities, but carried to evil excesses by his youthfulness, his nobility, and the lewd company he kept. But, a little before his death, he underwent a change, and sincerely repented of his wrongdoings. As a token of his penitence, "he made a few verses, as it were his *cygnea oratio*, which I found after his decease scribbled with his own hand". The metaphor employed in the poem is derived from dicing. The *main* in the game of hazard is a number (from 5 to 9 inclusive) called by the caster before the dice are thrown. The word *bye* used in antithesis seems to have meant the same as *chance* in the later language.

Besides telling us of the poets in the Wyse family at Waterford, Stanihurst mentions two sonnet writers of his own period, WILLIAM NUGENT and ELIAS SHETH of Kilkenny, a scholar of Oxford, "a pleasant conceited companion, full of

mirth without gall". None of their works appear to be extant. He tells us, too, of DORMER the poet, who sang of the decay of New Ross, of which town he was a native. He also speaks of his brother-in-law, LORD DUNSANY, as "a curious maker", i.e. an ingenious writer of verse. We may feel sure that LORD OFFALY wrote more pieces than that one which Stanihurst has happily preserved for us. And there must have been many other poets of sorts in the country, for the Earl of Sussex, writing to the Secretary of State in 1561, quotes a ditty then popular, entitled *The Land of Perdition*, which condemned his government.* *The Book of Howth* (p. 200) says that certain songs and "makings" (poems) were made of his doings in the country.

Indeed, a number of fifth-rate poets, writing in English, seem to have sprung up in the country. Stanihurst says contemptuously, in his Epistle Dedicatory† to Lord Dunsany, "Are there not divers scavengers of drafty poetry in this our age, that baste their papers with smeary lard savouring altogether of the frying-pan? What Tom Towley is so simple, that will not attempt to be a rhymer?" No doubt he is thinking of Anglo-Irish writers, as well as of English ones, for one of the illustrations he gives of this miserable sort of poetry was almost certainly written in Ireland. Indeed, one of his poems is a satire on the pieces which these "unlearned rhymers" composed whenever a great person died. If it is a man they commemorate, they describe him as

For gravity the Cato, for wit Mars, Bacchus, Apollo:
A great Alexander, with a long white neck like a gander,
In wisdom Solomon, for strength and courage a Samson,
A Damon and Pythias, for gold and silver a Midas.

If it is a lady, they describe her as

The fair lady Thisbe,
A Sarah for goodness, a great Bellona for hugeness,
For mildness Anna, for chastity godly Susanna.

* Grattan Flood, *History of Irish Music* (4th ed.), p. 158.

† Arber's ed. p. 9.

The critical reader will think of the proverb anent glass houses and stone-throwing, and will feel that there is very little difference between Stanihurst's serious verse and his imitations of the poetasters.

FRAGMENTS AND SCRIBBLINGS

This chapter may be brought to a conclusion with the consideration of some fragments of verse, seemingly unimportant, yet possessing a pathetic interest, as they represent to us all that is left of a great mass of Anglo-Irish ballads and popular songs in English and French; while the Latin scribblings are not without their own value.

We may commence with that oft-quoted couplet, given in Dr Hanmer's *Chronicle*, and elsewhere, the origin and date of which is unknown.

At the creek of Baginbun
Ireland was lost and won.

This indeed, and the two following couplets, may not be fragments of lost ballads, but may rather be examples that have survived—in Professor Curtis's happy phrase—of “common street and fireside English”, proverbs, pithy sayings, in the mouth of the lower orders.

In the story of the Kyteler witch trial it is said (Campion's *History*, chap. v) that Dame Alice Kyteler was wont to sweep all the filth of the streets of Kilkenny towards the door of her son William Outlawe, at the same time secretly whispering this charm:

To the house of William my son
Hie all the wealth of Kilkenny town.

Stanihurst, in the Epistle Dedicatory to Lord Dunsany, quotes two lines which he assuredly picked up before he left Ireland:

He is not a king that weareth satin,
But he is a king that eateth bacon.

Interspersed through the *cantilenae** in the Red Book of Ossory are fragments of eight songs, six of which are in

* *Hist. MSS Commission, 10th Report*, appendix, part v, pp. 243 ff.

English, two in French. These were apparently inserted so as to give an indication of the airs to which the sacred songs were to be sung, though their metre does not always suit the *cantilena* to which they are prefixed. But they are of extreme interest as they represent the "foul, theatrical, and secular songs" with which Bishop de Ledrede was unwilling to have his clerks defile their mouths: in other words, they are precious traces of popular songs and ballads, sung, and possibly composed, in the city of Kilkenny early in the fourteenth century. From what is left of them they would appear to have been, for the most part, dainty love songs, not deserving of the severe censures which the Bishop fixed upon them.

Some of these fragments consist of but one line.

- (1) Have mercy on me, friar: barefoot that I go.

The first half of this line is quoted in two other places.

- (2) Have good-day, leman.

A greeting from one lover to another. *Leman* = sweetheart (of either sex).

- (3) Hey! how the chevaldoures woke all night.

Chevaldour is perhaps for *cheverel* = a young cock, variety of goldfinch, or for *chelaundre*, a species of lark.

Of some fragments two lines are preserved.

- (4) So do the nightingale sing full merry;
Shall I never for thy love longer carry.

Carry = be anxious. This couplet is quoted again, in almost the same words. It is apparently a refrain to a song.

- (5) Gaineth me no garland of green
But it be of withés ywrought.

i.e. No garland of green will be suitable for me except it be one formed of willows. This is the refrain to a song of unrequited love, of which the willow was a symbol. In the ballad *Willow, Willow, Willow*, given in Percy's *Reliques*, the willow is said to be "a garland for lovers forsaken most meet".

Of another five lines are preserved:

- (6) Alas! how should I sing?
 Yloren is my playing.
 How should I with that old man
 To leven, and (leave) my leman,
 Sweetest of all thing?

The plot of this ballad can be guessed at. A girl is being torn from her sweetheart, and forced into an advantageous marriage with an old man. As a result she is heart-broken, and has no desire for singing or enjoyment. *Yloren* = destroyed, put an end to; *leven* = to live with.

This, and the next, are traces of French love songs.

- (7) Harrow! ieo su trahy
 Par fol amor de mal amy.
 Woe is me! I am undone
 Through foolish love for faithless one.
- (8) Heu alas pur amour,
 Qy moy myst en taunt dolour.
 Ah! alas! for love, that me
 Brought to so great misery.

Wells (p. 492) describes a fragment of an English manuscript (1300-50) containing popular songs, of some of which only a line remains; these, he says, were rude pieces for singing by the roadside or at the alehouse, as may have been the case with our Kilkenny fragments. One of these is of interest to him, as he considers it to be perhaps the earliest English dance song extant. It is of more interest to us, as it is placed in the mouth of an Irish girl, and so presumably was composed by an Anglo-Irish minstrel.*

I am of Ireland,
 And of the holy land
 Of Ireland.
 Good sir, pray I thee,
 For of *saint charité*,
 Come and dance with me
 In Ireland.

* Printed in *Anglia*, xxx, p. 175; J. E. Wells, *Manual of Middle-English Writings*, p. 492.

Two fragments of English verse, presumably composed by Anglo-Irish writers, appear in the *Book of Howth*,* a volume that at one time seems to have been preserved amongst the archives of Dublin Castle, but subsequently passed into Carew's possession, and is now at Lambeth. It is written in different, though contemporaneous, hands, and dates from the sixteenth century. On p. 84 is the following piece:

Deceit deceiveth, and shall be deceived,
For by deceit who is deceivable;
Though his deceit be not out perceived,
To a deceiver deceit is returnable.
Fraud quit with fraud is guerdon full convenable;
For who with fraud fraudulent is found,
To a defrauder fraud will aye rebound.

In the same printed volume (p. 452), amongst miscellaneous matters in the Carew MSS, is a verse under the heading, "Albus Liber Scac. Dublin." (i.e. White Book of the Exchequer of Dublin). This is also quoted by Sir J. Davys in his *Discovery of the True Reasons*, etc. (ed. H. Morley). It laments the decay and ruin of the English language, and blames the Government. Davys says that many of the Anglo-Norman families embraced Irish customs, forgot the English language, and took Irish surnames. "The Government, being grown weak by their defection, did, to reduce them to obedience, grant them many protections and pardons, the cheapness whereof in all ages hath brought great dishonour and damage to this commonweal. . . . Hereupon was that old verse made which I find written in the White Book of the Exchequer, in a hand as ancient as the time of King Edward III."

By granting charters of peace
To false English, without lease
This land shall be much undo.
But gossipred and alterage,
And losing of our language
Have mickly help thereto.

* Published in the *Calendars of Carew MSS.*

Without lease means "without lying, truly": it qualifies the next line. *Gossipred* was the custom of standing sponsor at a child's baptism, by which such sponsor became spiritually connected with the infant's parents. *Alterage* or *fosterage* was the custom of placing children out with foster-parents, as a result of which strong ties of affection sprang up between the real parents and the foster-parents. Both customs were frowned upon by the Government, but the Anglo-Irish frequently practised them with the native Irish.

On p. 234 of the *Book of Howth* is a poem on the Templars, in sixteen stanzas. The greater part of it deals with the rise and fall of Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Templars, who was put to death by Philip le Bel, King of France. It seems improbable, therefore, that this poem comes from the pen of an Anglo-Irish writer.

Written on one of the membranes of an account-roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Dublin,* is a short French love poem. Of its origin, or of its authorship, nothing is known; it may have been composed in Ireland, and so we give it here.

Jay en vous tout ma fyance,
 Ma bele dame, par my foy,
 Et de autry ne ay sovenaunce;
 Qar fors que vous nat pussance
 De rejoer le ceor de moy.
 Et prengne cy grant plesaunce
 A toutz le foyth quant jeo vous voy,
 Que parenplie su de sofysaunce.

Which might be translated thus:

My trust's in you, my lady fair,
 I love none other, this I swear;
 For none in truth, but you, has power
 To give my heart one happy hour.
 Believe me, lady, just the sight
 Of you affords me keen delight;
 For when I gaze on you, I wis,
 Am I filled full of joy and bliss.

* Ed. James Mills. The poem is on p. 125.

Finally, Stanihurst preserves for us, in an anecdote, the title of a song. He tells us that when Maynooth Castle was captured by the English during the rebellion of Silken Thomas two of the garrison that were taken prisoners, namely Hayward and James Delahyde, two choristers of the Earl of Kildare's chapel, came and threw themselves on the ground, pitifully warbling a song *Dulcis Amica*. So sweetly did they sing that the Lord Deputy pardoned them.*

SCRIBBLINGS

These are in Latin, and though they can hardly be classed as literature yet they often contain points of interest. On p. 36 of the *Book of Howth* the following occurs:

Sorti supernorum scriptor rubri societur.
Morti malignorum raptor libri copuletur.

This appears to be an early instance of those "book rhymes" so dear to schoolboys and others.

In the Red Book of the Irish Exchequer† are many scribblings, which are apparently not later than the middle of the fifteenth century and may be older. Some of them appear to be meaningless, whilst others are moralisings or riddles. In one the venality of judges is sarcastically commented on, and the pungency of the satire is increased by the lines being written on a page on which is also found the celebrated drawing of the Court of Exchequer and its officials.

Lex est defuncta, quia iudicis est manus uncta.
Propter unguentum, jus est in carcere tentum.

The following is bitterly true of other ages besides that in which it was written.

Donec mare erit siccum
Nunquam pauper habebit amicum.

One couplet praises the Cistercians in a curious mixture

* Stanihurst, *Continuation of the Chronicles of Ireland* (Holinshed, vol. vi, ed. of 1808), p. 300.

† *Kilkenny Archaeological Journal* (1854-5), pp. 35 ff.

of Latin and English; it is the only specimen of macaronic verse in Ireland that we have come across.

Gratia nulla perit nisi gratia grey (white) monachorum:
Est et semper erit unthought in fine laborum.

This might well be the tailpiece affixed to his work by some scribe dissatisfied with the payment he has received. Another couplet satirises the Benedictines:

Sunt tria nigrorum devastant res monachorum;
Renes, et venter, et pocula sumpta frequenter.

There are also to be found in the same volume some music (apparently in connection with a service held in the Court of Exchequer), and a hymn or poem addressed to St Nicholas.

CHAPTER VII

SATIRICAL POEMS

In this chapter the place of honour must be assigned to that delightful satirical poem *The Land of Cokaygne*,* which has been described as "the airiest and cleverest piece of satire in the whole range of Early English, if not of English, poetry". It has always been classed as English literature pure and simple, but it is not an exaggeration to say that the English-speaking world owes this piece to an Anglo-Irish writer, and its preservation to an Irish monastery. This is made clear from the following considerations:

(1) The unique copy of the poem is preserved in Harley 913, as one of those pieces which, as the reader is by this time aware, appear to have been composed and written down in the Franciscan House at Kildare, thus forming the earliest specimens of the English language in Ireland. (2) It is connected by language with these. (3) Local allusions seem to connect it with Kildare, viz. the abbey of white monks and of grey (Carmelites and Franciscans). That the writer seems to include both Orders under one roof may be due to a confused recollection of the earlier monastic system of St Brigit, in which the monks and nuns lived in different parts of the same establishment.

Wells (p. 228) dates the poem 1250-1300. It may be derived from a French source, but one that is now not forthcoming, for it differs greatly from the extant French version. The pious ending, and the allusion to the seven years' penance appear to be the English poet's additions, as they are said not to be part of the general Cokaygne theme. But the piece is far from being a mere translation, for the writer has impressed his own sprightly personality upon it. He

* Heuser, p. 141.

would seem to have been a Goliard, a wandering scholar, of particularly lively imagination; while he shews more sympathy with, than disapproval of, the doings of the monks and nuns. Wright in his *History of Caricature and Grotesque in Art*, chap. x, tells us much of these Goliards, these vagabond clerks, who wandered about from mansion to mansion, and from monastery to monastery, ever welcome at men's tables because of their brilliant wit, their skill in rhyming, and their gifts of satire. Chambers in his *Medieval Stage* (I, p. 60) says of them: "Some of these were actually out-at-elbows and disrobed clerks; others were scholars, drifting from university to university, and making their living meantime by their wits; most of them were at least in minor orders. But practically they lived the life of the minstrels, tramping the road with them and bringing into the profession a trained facility of composition, and at least a flavour of classical learning". Such a merry scholar must have found his way to the Franciscan House at Kildare, where he would have been made welcome by the inmates, who did not fear being satirised.

The next poem to be dealt with in this chapter also comes from the pen of a Goliard, who was even more of a madcap. It should be noticed that there are in Harley 913 some Goliardic pieces in Latin; these may have been brought to Kildare by a Goliard, if indeed some of them were not composed there by him.

Cokaygne has been printed more than once, but it can bear being printed again. We give it in its entirety, with the exception of two passages which can be consulted in the original, or in Ellis's *Specimens*, vol. I.

Far in sea, west of Spain,
Is a land that's named Cokaygne,
There is no land under heavenriche¹
Of wealth, of goodness, it iliche²,
Though Paradise be merry and bright

5

¹ The kingdom of heaven. ² Equal to it.

SATIRICAL POEMS

Cokaygne is of fairer sight.
 What is there in Paradise
 But grass, and flowers, and green ris¹?
 Though there be joy and great dute²
 There is no food only fruit; 10
 There is no hall, bower, nor bench,
 But water man his thirst to quench.
 There be no men, but two,
 Hely and Enok³ also;
 Elinglich⁴ may they go 15
 Where there dwelleth men no mo⁵.

In Cokaygne is meat and drink
 Without care, thought, and swink⁶;
 The meat is choice, the drink is clear,
 At noon, russin⁷, and supper. 20
 I say for sooth, bouthe were⁸,
 There is no land on earth its peer,
 Under heaven's no land, iwis⁹,
 Of so great joy and bliss. 25
 There is many a sweetë sight,
 All is day, there is no night.
 There is neither quarrel nor strife,
 There is no death, but ever life,
 There is no lack of meat nor cloth,
 There is no man nor woman wroth, 30
 There is no serpent, wolf, nor fox,
 Horse nor capil¹⁰, cow nor ox,
 There is no sheep, nor swine, nor goat,
 Nothing unclean, lo! God it wot¹¹.
 Neither harace nor stode¹², 35
 The land is full of every good.
 There is no fly, flea, nor louse,
 In cloth, in farm, in bed, nor house;
 There is no thunder, sleet, nor hail,
 Neither a vile worm nor snail, 40
 Nor no storm, rain, or wind,
 There is no man nor woman blind.
 But all is sport, joy and glee,

¹ Twigs, branches.

² Pleasure.

³ Enoch and Elijah.

⁴ Mournfully.

⁵ No other men.

⁶ Toil.

⁷ Mid-day meal.

⁸ Without a doubt.

⁹ In truth.

¹⁰ Nag.

¹¹ God knows it.

¹² Stud of horses or stable.

SATIRICAL POEMS

Lucky's he who there may be.
 There are rivers great and fine 45
 Of oil, milk, honey, and wine,
 Water serveth there to no thing
 But to boil and to washing,
 There is all manner of fruit,
 All is solace and dedute¹. 50

There is a right fair abbey
 Both of white monks and of grey.
 There be bowers and halls,
 All of pastys be the walls,
 Of flesh, of fish, and of rich meat, 55
 The pleasantest that men may eat.
 Flouren cakes be the shingles all
 Of church, and cloister, bower, and hall.
 The pins be fat puddings,
 Rich meat for princes and kings. 60
 Men may thereof eat enow
 All with right, and not with wogh².
 All is common to young and old,
 To stout and stern, weak and bold.
 There is a cloister fair and light, 65
 Broad and long, of seemly sight.
 The pillars of that cloister all
 Be iturned of crystal,
 With their base and capital
 Of green jasper and red coral. 70

In the lawn there is a tree
 Very pleasant for to see.
 The root is ginger and galingale³
 The scions be all sedwale⁴,
 Choice maces⁵ be the flower, 75
 The rind canel⁶ of sweet odour,
 The fruit gillyflower of good smack⁷,
 Of cubebs there is no lack;
 There be roses of red ble⁸,
 And lilies pleasant for to see, 80

¹ Delight.

² Altogether with right and not with wrongdoing.

³ A plant from the aromatic root of which a spice was prepared.

⁴ Zedoary, a root resembling ginger.

⁵ Spice made of dried outer

covering of nutmeg.

⁶ Cinnamon.

⁷ Scent, taste.

⁸ Colour.

That never fade day nor night,
 This should be a sweet sight.
 There be four wells in the abbey,
 Of triacle and of halwei¹,
 Of balm and also piement², 85
 Ever flowing to right rent³.
 Of the streams all the mould⁴
 Stones precious, and gold.
 There is sapphire and uniune⁵,
 Carbuncle and astiune⁶, 90
 Emerald, lugre⁷, and prassiune⁸,
 Beryl, onyx, and topasiune⁹,
 Amethyst and chrysolite,
 Chalcedony and epetite¹⁰.

There be birds many and fale¹¹, 95
 Throstle, thrush, and nightingale,
 Chalandre and woodwale¹²,
 And other birds without tale¹³,
 That cease never by their might
 Merry to sing day and night. 100
 Yet I do you more to wit¹⁴:
 The geese iroasted on the spit
 Fly to that abbey, God it wot,
 And cry out "Geese, all hot, all hot!"
 They bring of garlic great plenty, 105
 The best prepared that man may see.
 The leverokes that be cuth¹⁵
 Alight down to man his mouth,
 Prepared in stew-pan very well,
 Stuffed with gillyflowers and canel. 110
 There is no talk of no drink,
 But take enough without swink.

When the monks go to mass
 All the windows that be of glass
 Turn into crystal bright 115

¹ Healing medicine, and balsam.
 and spices. ³ To good profit.

² Mixed drink of wine, honey

composed of, etc. ⁵ Pearl.

⁴ All the beds of the streams are

⁶ Unidentified precious stone.

⁷ Jacynth (Ex. xxviii, 19, R.V.).

⁸ Chrysoprase. ⁹ Topaz.

¹⁰ Bloodstone. ¹¹ Numerous.

¹² Goldfinch, or perhaps some sort

of lark: woodlark. ¹³ Beyond count.

¹⁴ I let you know in addition.

¹⁵ The larks that are trained.

To give the monks more light.
 When the masses be isaid,
 And the books up ilaid,
 The crystal turneth into glass
 In the state it rather¹ was. 120

The young monks each day
 After meat go to play.
 There is no hawk nor fowl so swift
 Better flying in the lift²
 Than the monks high of mood 125
 With their sleeves and their hood.
 When the abbot seeth them flee
 That he holds for much glee,
 But nathless all there among
 He biddeth them light to evensong. 130
 But the monks alight not down
 But far fly in a randown³.

When the abbot sees that they will not come to him he
 summons them by a method which he knows will attract
 them. They return, and

Turn meekly home to drink,
 And go to their collation, 145
 A right fair procession.

Another abbey is thereby,
 Forsooth a great fair nunnery,
 Upon a river of sweet milk
 Where is plenty great of silk. 150
 When the summer day is hot
 The young nuns take a boat
 And do them forth in that river
 Both with oars and with stere⁴.
 When they be far from the abbey 155
 They make them naked for to play,
 And leap down into the brim,
 And do them slyly for to swim.

.
 Whoso will that land come to
 Full great penance he must do:

Formerly. ² Air. ³ In a furious course. ⁴ Rudder.

SATIRICAL POEMS

Seven years in swinē's dirt
He must wade, well ye wit, 180
All anon up to the chin,
So he shall that land win.

Lordlingēs good and hend¹
May ye never of world wend
For ye stand to your chance² 185
And fulfil that penance,
That ye might that land isee
And nevermore turn agē³.
Pray we God, so mote it be.
Amen, *pour saint charité*. 190

¹ Courteous. ² May you never leave the world till you try your
fortune about getting to that land. ³ Again.

The next piece* to be considered is plainly the work of a wild harum-scarum Goliard, a youth bubbling over with mirth and mischief. He pokes fun at everyone—archangels, saints, monks, nuns, secular priests, shopkeepers, hucksters—all are butts for his keen wit. Delightful are the couplets at the end of each stanza, in which the writer, as it were, stands back to contemplate his work and then praises himself for the excellency of its construction. At the end of stanzas 1 and 5 he gives indications of having travelled far and wide; but that the poem was penned in Ireland is made certain by the evidence of language, and by the allusion to Drogheda in stanza 6, while the writer introduces two Irish words, i.e. *gilmin* in stanza 7 (correctly *giolmanach* = tattler), and *corrin* in stanza 8 (correctly *cuirín* = pot, can): perhaps three, if *goshorne* in stanza 19 represents *garsun* (from French *garçon*).

The verse-structure is said to be unique. The first two long lines of each stanza rhyme with each other; the second two do not rhyme at all; while the closing couplet rhymes. It has been supposed that verse constructed according to this principle was known as *baston*, a word that occurs in stanzas 12, 13, and 15.

* Heuser, p. 150.

SATIRICAL POEMS

1. Hail, St Michael with the long spear!
Fair be thy wings upon thy shoulder.
Thou hast a red kirtle anon to thy feet,
Thou art the best angel that God ever made.
This verse is full well iwrought,
'Tis from very far ibrought.
2. Hail, St Christopher with thy long stake!
Thou bearest our Lord Jesus Christ over the broad lake.
Many great congers swim about thy feet.
How many herrings for a penny at Westcheap in London?
This verse is of holy writ,
It comes of noble wit.
3. Saint Mary's bastard, the Magdalen's son,
To be well clothed indeed was thy wone¹.
Thou bearest a box in thy hand ipainted all of gold.
Thou wert wont to be gracious, give us some of thy spices.
This verse is imakēd well
Of consonants and of vowel.
4. Hail, St Dominic with thy long staff!
It is at the top end crooked like a gaff;
Thou bearest a book on thy back, I think it is a Bible.
Though thou be a good clerk, be thou not too high².
Trie rime la! God it wot³;
Such another on earth is not.
5. Hail, St Francis, with thy many fowls,
Kites and crows, ravens and owls,
Four and twenty wildges⁴, and a peacock!
Many a bold beggar followeth thy route⁵.
This verse is full well iset,
From right far it was ifet⁶.
6. Hail be ye friars with the white copes!
Ye have a house at Drogheda, where men make ropes.
Ever ye be roving the land all about;
Of the water-dashers⁷ ye rob the churches.
Master he was very good⁸
That this sentence understood.

Custom. ² Do not be too proud. ³ Lo, a choice rhyme, God knows it! ⁴ Wild geese. ⁵ Company. ⁶ Fetched. ⁷ Apparently holy-water sprinklers. ⁸ He was a very good master who, etc.

SATIRICAL POEMS

7. Hail be ye gilmins with your black gowns!
Ye leave the wilderness and fill the towns.
Minor without, and preacher within:
Your habit is of gadering¹, that is muckle shame.
Slyly is this verse isaid,
It were harm adown ilaid².
8. Hail, ye holy monks with your corrin³
Late and early filled with ale and wine!
Deep can ye booze, that is all your care,
With St Benedict's scourge oft ye are disciplined.
Take ye heed all to me!
That this is sly⁴ ye may well see.
9. Hail be ye nuns of St Mary's house,
God's bower-maidens, and His own spouse!
Often mistread⁵ ye your shoes, your feet be full tender:
Datheit the sotter⁶ that tans your leather!
Very well he understood
That made this ditty so good.
10. Hail be ye priests with your broad books!
Though your crowns be shaven, fair be your crooks.
Ye and other lewidmen⁷ deal but a houe⁸
When ye deal holy bread, give me but a little.
Sikirlich⁹ he was a clerk
That wrought this crafty¹⁰ work.
11. Hail be ye merchants with your great packs
Of drapery, avoirdupois¹¹, and your wool-sacks,
Gold, silver, stones, rich marks¹², and eke pounds!
Little give ye thereof to the wretched poor.
Sly he was, and full of wit,
That this lore put in writ.
12. Hail be ye tailors with your sharp shears!
To make wrong hoods ye cut many gores.
Against midwinter hot be your needles;
Though your seams seem fair, they last a short while.
The clerk that this baston wrought,
Well he woke, and slept right nought.

¹ Gathering together. ² It would be a pity if it were laid aside, neglected.
³ Pot, can. ⁴ Cunningly made. ⁵ Tread awry. ⁶ Misfortune,
ill-luck, to the cobbler. ⁷ Laymen. ⁸ Give but a hood.
⁹ Assuredly. ¹⁰ Skilful. ¹¹ Merchandise sold by weight. ¹² A coin
of the value of 13s. 4d.

13. Hail be ye cobblers with your many lasts,
 With your dried hides of various beasts,
 And trobles, and treisuses, bochevamp¹, and awls!
 Black and filthy be your teeth, dirty was that route².
 Is not this baston well ipight³?
 Each word him sit aright.
14. Hail be ye skimmers with your drench kive⁴!
 Whoso smelleth thereto, woe is him alive!
 When that it thundereth, ye might therein—
 Datheit⁵ your courtesy, ye stink all the street.
 Worthy it were, that he were king
 That dited⁶ this choice thing.
15. Hail be ye potters⁷ with your pole-axe!
 Fair be your apron, yellow be your fax⁸.
 Ye stand at the schamil⁹, broad ferlich bernies¹⁰;
 Flies you follow, ye swallow enow¹¹.
 The best clerk of all this town
 Craftfully made this baston.
16. Hail be ye bakers with your loaves small
 Of white bread and black, full many and fale¹²!
 Ye pinch on the right weight¹³ against God's law,
 To the fair pillory, I rede, ye take heed.
 This verse is iwrought so well
 That no tongue iwis may tell.
17. Hail be ye brewers¹⁴ with your gallons,
 Pottles, and quarts over all the towns¹⁵.
 Your thumbs bear much away¹⁶, shame have the guile¹⁷:
 Beware of the cucking-stool¹⁸, the lake is deep and filthy.
 Sikerlich¹⁹ he was a clerk
 That so slyly wrought this work.

¹ *Trobles* = waste leather. *Treisuses* = worn pieces of leather. *Bochevamp* = botched vamps or fronts of shoes. ² Company. ³ Set. ⁴ Drenching-

vat in which skins are steeped. ⁵ Misfortune to. ⁶ Prepared.

⁷ A scribal error for *bochers* = butchers. ⁸ Hair. ⁹ Meat-block.

¹⁰ Great strong fellows. ¹¹ You swallow enough of them. ¹² Numerous.

¹³ You give short weight. ¹⁴ *Brewers* and *hucksters* (next verse) are

feminine forms, so the reference appears to be to *women*, not men.

¹⁵ I.e. everywhere. ¹⁶ This alludes to the custom of the seller of liquor sticking his thumb into the vessel, so as to avoid filling it to the brim,

and in this way cheating the customer. ¹⁷ May the deceit bring shame!

¹⁸ The instrument used for ducking evildoers in a pond or river. ¹⁹ Assuredly.

18. Hail be ye hucksters down by the lake,
 With candles, and golokes¹, and the pots black,
 Tripe, and cows' feet, and sheeps' heads!
 With this foul trumpery filthy is your inn.
 He is sorry of his life
 That is fast to such a wife.
19. Fi a debles, kaites², that comb the wool!
 All the schindes of the tronon high upon your skull³!
 Ye made me such a goshorne⁴ over all the woves⁵;
 Therefore I made one of you sit upon a heckle⁶.
 He was noble clerk, and good,
 That this deep lore understood.
20. Make glad, my friends, ye sit too long still,
 Speak now, and be glad, and drink all your fill!
 Ye have heard of men's life that dwell in the land;
 Drink deep, and make glad, for have ye no other need.
 This song is isaid of me,
 Ever iblessed mote ye be.

¹ Tubs. ² Fie in the devil's name, caitiffs. ³ This line may mean:
 All the fragments of wool be on your heads. ⁴ Such a fool(?).

⁵ Walls, buildings, i.e. everywhere. ⁶ An instrument for carding wool.

The writer satirises six of the monastic Orders, viz. Dominicans; Franciscans; Carmelites ("friars with the white copes"); the "gilmins", who are "minor without and preacher within", and whom Heuser takes to be the Eremites of St Augustine; the Benedictines; and the nuns of St Mary's house. Where were all these monastic establishments situated? The poem has been given the title "A Satire on the People of Kildare" for no other reason than that it is found in the manuscript in which the name of Michael of Kildare occurs. But the town of Kildare never contained so many establishments; it seems much more probable, as Heuser suggests, that the satire is aimed at Dublin and its inhabitants. In that city those five Orders of monks had monasteries, while there were also two houses dedicated to St Mary.

It will be noticed that the writer satirises the Dominicans and Franciscans in the persons of their founders, while he deals generally with the other Orders. Also, for no reason

apparent at first sight, he commences his poem with stanzas dealing with St Michael, St Christopher, and St James (this is presumably St James the Less, the son of Mary (Mark xv, 40), though there is no reason for identifying her with Mary Magdalene; possibly the writer did it through ignorance). But, from a study of the matter in stanzas 1-5 we are strongly of the opinion that the writer has before his mind's eye five stained-glass windows, representing (1) St Michael, clad in a red tunic, and bearing a long spear; (2) St Christopher, carrying Christ across the water, and leaning on his staff, while round his feet the fish are swimming; (3) St James, gorgeously clad, and holding a gold box. This description is derived from some apocryphal source unknown to the present writer; (4) St Dominic, with a book on his back, and carrying a crosier; (5) St Francis preaching to the birds. Why he gibes gleefully at these we cannot tell; but here, as well as in other passages in the poem, we must assume that there are topical allusions, which, as always, are easily understood by the people of the period, but have no meaning for later generations. Indeed, the poem seems full of such allusions, and this is why it is so difficult to understand in places.

In his satirical remarks he deals gently with the Franciscans, more gently than with any of the others. He may have been connected with that Order, or at the time of writing he may have been a welcome guest in one of their Houses (Kildare?), and so felt it incumbent on himself to let his hosts down lightly.

There is a short but bitter poem,* attacking the Franciscans, which may well have been written in Ireland by an Anglo-Irish poet. The only passage in it affording any indication of place is the allusion to Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh, the implacable enemy of the Mendicant Orders; as it seems to speak of him as still alive, and active in his attacks on them, the poem must have been composed before

* Wright, *Political Poems and Songs*, I, p. 268.

1360, the year of his death. Heuser (p. 75) thinks that the dialect indicates an Irish origin. The refrain "With an O and an I" connects it with poems written in England. But when we bear in mind the literary connection at that period between the two countries, we can see that this fact would not necessarily rule out its being written by an Anglo-Irish poet. FitzRalph's attitude against the Mendicants must have encouraged the composition of satirical poems in Ireland, and it may be that in this one we have the sole survivor of a large number of pieces.

In it the Franciscans are attacked, not on the usual grounds, but because they appear to have made theatrical representations in dumb show of some of the incidents in the Bible, notably the Crucifixion, with the object of impressing these on the minds of their unlettered audiences. To us this seems laudable, but it aroused the writer's ire, and he gives vent to it in very bitter language.

The friars that once were so humble have waxed very proud. May He Who sits above us soon disperse them! They think more of St Francis than of St Paul.

First they jest on God, that all men may see,
When they hang Him on high on a green tree,
With leaves and with blossoms that bright are of ble¹,
That was never God's Son, by my leuté².

With an O and an I, men ween that they wede³,
To carp so of clergy, they can not their creed⁴.

They have done Him on a cross far up in the sky,
And fastened on Him wings, as He should fly.
This false feigned belief they shall sour bye⁵,
On that lovely Lord so for to lie.

With an O and an I, one sayeth full still,
Armachan⁶ destroy them, if it is God's will.

¹ Colour. ² Loyalty. ³ Men think them to be mad. ⁴ I.e. the Franciscans abuse the secular clergy without knowing anything of them.

⁵ Bitterly make amends for. ⁶ Ardmachanus, i.e. Archbishop FitzRalph.

Another friar descends from the sky (apparently by means of wires) clad in a grey gown. In another place the writer

sees a friar giving a most realistic representation of the Crucifixion, as he was bleeding from his hands, feet, and side.

A cart was made all of fire, as it should be;
A gray friar I saw therein, that best pleased me.
Well I wot they shall be burnt, by my leuté;
God grant me that grace that I may it see.
With an O and an I, burnt be they all!
And all that help thereto fair mote befall.

I.e. may those who assist at the work of burning them have good luck! This stanza apparently refers to the (supposed) ascent of Elijah in a fiery chariot. The writer ends his poem by saying They preach of poverty, but they do not love it. Commit the most heinous sin possible, and they will absolve you for sixpence.

There is in Harley 913 a curious little satirical poem entitled *Nego*, which is aimed against the trickery of the dialecticians. *Nego* is taken as "the most representative and objectionable of the terms employed by the clerical hair-splitters, as, knowing nothing, they conceal their ignorance, and pretending search for truth they destroy truth". *Nego* is an exceedingly poor clerk; truth draws men to the bliss of heaven, but *Nego* does the opposite. The false, unlearned clerks make use of this and other terms, and thus rob men of truth. Heuser (p. 139) holds that the author was a Franciscan.

Of the Latin scribblings in the Red Book of the Irish Exchequer, alluded to in the end of the preceding chapter, the most interesting is a little Goliardic piece, a satire on women, composed by a confirmed misogynist, who had apparently reached that position as a result of practical experience! It is written in the metre of the hymn *Stabat Mater*.

Fuge cetus feminarum,
Namque status omnis harum,
Parva dat stipendia.
Si sit vīrgo, quam tu gliscis,
Dampna rerum concupiscis,
Cordis et incendia.
Maritatam si tu amas,

SATIRICAL POEMS

Pacem spernis, te defamas,
 Incendis periculum.
 Vidua haec est elata,
 Fraude plena, delicata,
 Eris ei ridiculum.
 Monialis hec si placet,
 Semper petit, numquam tacet,
 Radit ut navicula.
 Si bagute facieris,
 Mox per eam diffameris,
 Linguam fieret ut facula.

The writer advises his friends to shun women altogether. Do you long for a virgin—you are bringing heart-burning and loss upon yourself. If you desire a married woman, you are looking for trouble. Is it a widow?—she is wanton, and will make a joke of you. Does a nun (*monialis*) please you—she is never at rest, but moves about like a little skiff. Do you seek a lady of easy virtue (*bagute*)—you will be defamed by her, and she has a tongue like a burning torch.

As a tailpiece to this chapter may be given a little satire* on the town of Armagh and its inhabitants, the length of which is in inverse ratio to its bitterness. The reputed author is OCTAVIAN DEL PALATIO, a native of Florence, who became Archbishop of Armagh in 1480. Evidently he was not impressed by his first visit to his metropolitan see.

Civitas Ardmachana,
 Civitas vana,
 Absque bonis moribus;
 Mulieres nudaæ,
 Carnes crudæ,
 Paupertas in aedibus.

Which, being translated, is

Armagh is notorious
 For being vain-glorious.
 The men void of manners; their spouses
 Go naked, they eat
 Raw flesh for their meat,
 And poverty dwells in their houses.

* *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, II (1872), p. 72; III (1875), p. 348.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RELIGIOUS DRAMA

It is possible to commence with the history of the religious drama in Dublin at a fairly early date, as there is preserved a late and well-developed form of the Easter Dramatic Office, than which only two others of earlier date in England are known to exist. It is contained in a fourteenth-century manuscript of a Sarum Processional which in the following century was the property of the church of St John the Evangelist, Dublin; two copies survive, one in the Bodleian Library, the other in Archbishop Marsh's library, Dublin.* These plays, if one may so term them, were in Latin, and were acted in the churches at Easter by the clergy in order to impress the story of the Resurrection on the minds of their unlettered congregations. The actors' parts were sung, not spoken, the musical notes being given in the margin. On such pieces Morley in his *English Writers* (III, p. 117) says: "Their origin has been found in the development of a passage read as part of the Church Service from Mark xvi, 3-7, with an addition from the corresponding part of St Matthew (xxviii, 5-7). The slight development of this passage in the twelfth century from the form of anthem into half-dramatic dialogue led to further advance in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by elaboration of the short scriptural speeches, and by the insertion of new verses, always based on Scripture, that were sung in character. The piece from the first was closed with the *Te Deum*".

Briefly, the plot is as follows. Three persons, representing the three Maries, clad in surplices and silk copes (*super-*

* The Bodleian text has been printed by Chambers in his *History of the Medieval Stage*, II, p. 315; the facsimile serves as a frontispiece to that volume. The Marsh's Library text has been printed by Manly, *Specimens of pre-Shakespearean Drama*, I, p. xxii; facsimile in Frere, *Winchester Troper* (Henry Bradshaw Society), plate 26 b.

pelliceis et capis sericis), with their heads veiled, and each carrying a box supposed to be filled with aromatic ointment, come one after another to the entrance to the choir, and lament the death of Christ with the hymn *Heu! pius pastor occiditur*, which is only found in this and the Fleury (French) play. Then they unite, and announce their intention of proceeding to the tomb in order to anoint the body. As they are wondering who will roll away the stone an angel appears, and asks them whom they seek, and on their replying he tells them that Christ has risen. They enter the tomb, and on finding it empty they draw back a little, and with loud voices full of joy and wonder announce the fact. The angel bids them tell the disciples and Peter, and this they prepare to do.

Next come two bare-footed men, representing St John and St Peter, clad in albs without parures (i.e. plain albs, without patches of embroidery) and tunics. St John is vested in a white tunic, and bears a palm branch; while St Peter is in red, and carries his keys. These meet with the three Maries in the middle of the choir, and ask them what they have seen in the way. They tell them the news, and declare that they have beheld the empty napkin and grave clothes. After this they depart to the entrance to the choir, but the two disciples hasten to the representation of the sepulchre, John arriving there first. On finding the tomb empty they return to the choir, saying, "We must believe Mary rather than the lying crowd of the Jews". On learning of the fact of the Resurrection the entire choir breaks out into joyful singing:

Scimus Christum surrexisse
A mortuis vere.
Tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere!

After which the *Te Deum* is chanted, and the Maries, apostles, and angel withdraw. Thus the piece is well developed, requiring six actors, while it is not wanting in stage "properties" and costumes.*

* See E.E.T.S. (Ex. Ser.), No. 104, p. xxii, for a somewhat earlier account of the manner in which this Office was celebrated.

There are two plays on which something must be said, as both have a connection with Dublin, though, unfortunately, not as close a connection as one would wish. The first of these is a miracle play, entitled *The Play of the Sacrament*, and is the only text of this class that has been preserved in English. It is contained in a manuscript in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and the handwriting of it is that of the latter half of the fifteenth century. It is the work of two scribes, one of whom was probably an Irishman, but "the Irish peculiarities of the manuscript are clearly due to the scribe, and not to the author of the play, which was certainly written in England, and most probably in the East Midlands". It turns on a theme not uncommon in the Middle Ages, the alleged ill-treatment of the consecrated Host by a Jew. According to the "banns" or proclamation introducing the play, it was to be performed at Croxton, a place-name that occurs in several English counties.*

The second of these, a fragmentary piece, has been given by its first editor, Mr James Mills, the apt title of *The Pride of Life*, and is of considerable interest, as it is the earliest extant morality play in the English language. It was preserved on a parchment roll of accounts belonging to the canons of Christ Church, Dublin, and was copied on a blank portion of one of the membranes probably in the first half of the fifteenth century. It is presumed that the original was in the possession of some passing guest spending a night in the guesthouse of the monastery. On shewing it to some of the brothers they would have expressed a desire to possess a copy; permission being granted they would have then taken it hastily into the scriptorium of the monastery, and there copied it as rapidly as they could. The work of copying was entrusted to two scribes, who spoke different dialects: the one was an old man, who wrote a professional clerkly hand, though somewhat shaky, as if out of practice, or through old

* Waterhouse in E.E.T.S. (Ex. Ser.), No. 104, p. liv; text in *ibid.* p. 54, and Manly, *op. cit.* I, p. 239.

age; the second, who spoke a special variety of the northern dialect peculiar to Dublin, was unaccustomed to the copying of English manuscripts, and wrote a running hand. But, from the place-names in the play, it seems certain that it was composed in England, not in Dublin.*

Possibly it was acted by the canons of Christ Church in the church, or in the streets of the metropolis. Then it was entirely forgotten, and only came to light in recent years, to be printed, fortunately for all interested, as the original was burnt in the fire that consumed the Public Record Office. Some passages in it remind us of the Sermon-poems and *Sweet Jesus* of Harley 913.

We shall now pass to a consideration of the mystery plays, those pieces which were founded on the principal incidents of the Old and New Testaments, oftentimes with apocryphal additions, and which were played on "pageants", or moveable stages, in the streets by the various trade guilds, generally on the feast of Corpus Christi, but sometimes on other great Church festivals. Chambers, in his *History of the Medieval Stage* (II, p. 95), says: "An office was compiled for Corpus Christi by St Thomas Aquinas, and the leading ceremony was a great procession in which the Host, escorted by local dignitaries, religious bodies, and guilds, was borne through the streets, and displayed successively at out-of-door stations. When the plays were transferred to Corpus Christi they became more or less attached to this procession". Such plays were exceedingly popular all over England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and it is only to be expected that they would be found in Ireland too; indeed, they seem to have lasted in this country to a later date than in England.

The earliest allusion to the Corpus Christi procession in Dublin occurs in 1466, when it was ordered that from

* Waterhouse, *op. cit.* pp. lxiv, 88; Heuser, p. 66; J. Mills, *Account-Roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Dublin* (1891). A metrical translation is given in W. Keller, *Probleme der englischen Sprache und Kultur*.

henceforth such persons as will come to the city for the feasts of Corpus Christi, St George and St Patrick, for procession or pilgrimage, and for horse riding at Corpus Christi, be free without any vexation, coming, going, and abiding a day before and after, so that they bring no man his horse of the city (with them the which was stolen). The words in brackets are nearly faded. This passage, it must be admitted, is cryptically worded, but it seems to have been an order issued by the City Fathers giving freedom of coming and going to all who came to Dublin for the purpose of taking part in the processions. Similarly, the Mayors of York and Chester issued proclamations enjoining that all who resorted to the plays in those towns should use themselves peaceably, not cause any disturbance, and not carry weapons.*

Each city or town in England where religious plays were acted had its "cycle"—a modern expression—or series of plays. These cycles varied considerably in length; one of them might contain as many as forty-two plays, another as few as five. No doubt local circumstances, such as the number and wealth of the trade guilds, had much to do with the matter. In this connection there has been preserved a very important document in the municipal archives of Dublin dated 1498. It runs as follows:

The pageants of Corpus Christi Day, made by an old law, and confirmed by an assembly before Thomas Collier, Mayor of the City of Dublin, and Jurats, Bailiffs, and Commons, the 4th Friday after Midsummer in the XIIIth year of King Henry VII (1498).

Glovers—Adam and Eve, with an angel following, bearing a sword.

Shoemakers—Cain and Abel, with an altar and offerings.

Mariners, vintners, ship-carpenters, and salmon-takers—Noah with his ship, apparelled accordingly.

Weavers—Abraham and Isaac, with their altar and lamb.

Smiths, cloth-shearers, bakers, slaters, cooks, and masons—Pharaoh with his host.

* Gilbert, *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin*, I, p. 324; S. Clarke, *The Miracle Play in England*, pp. 24, 42.

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Skinner, house-carpenters, tanners, and embroiderers—For the body of the camel, and Our Lady and Child, well attired, with Joseph to lead the camel, and Moses with the Children of Israel, and the porters to bear the camel.

Goldsmiths—The three kings of Cologne (the Wise Men), riding worshipfully with the offerings, and with the star before them.

Coopers—The shepherds, with an angel singing *Gloria in Excelsis*.
Corpus Christi Guild—Christ in His Passion, with the three Maries, and angels bearing tapers of wax in their hands.

Tailors—Pilate with his fellowship, and his lady and knights well attired.

Barbers—Annas and Caiaphas, well attired.

Courteours*—Arthur with his knights.

Fishers—Twelve Apostles.

Merchants—The Prophets.

Butchers—Tormentors, with their garments well and cleanly painted.

The Mayor of Bullring, and bachelors of the same—The Nine Worthies, riding worshipfully, with their followers accordingly.

This is on p. 239 of Gilbert's *Calendar*. On p. 241 is given another list, undated, and headed "The pageants of Corpus Christi Procession", in which the courteours are directed to represent either the Nine Worthies or Arthur and his Knights. The Mayor of Bullring is also entered as representing the Nine Worthies, though this must be an entry made by a later hand. Otherwise this list is almost identical with the above. A shorter, and also undated, list is given by Walter Harris in his *History of Dublin*, chap. vii. This is also described as "The Pageants for the Procession on Corpus Christi Day". It agrees with the order of the first list, though not so many guilds were appointed to take part in the third, fifth, and sixth pageants. But in one notable respect it differs; it makes no mention at all of the courteours or of the Mayor of Bullring.

Of these three lists Harris's appears to be the oldest: it cannot be the latest, as it makes no mention of the Mayor of

* Perhaps *Courtiers* or *Courteers* = drivers of a cart called a "court" (*N.E.D.*).

Bullring. Gilbert's second list (that on p. 241) belongs to a transition period when the courteurs, the Mayor of Bullring and his followers, and certain guilds were demanding a place in the Corpus Christi festivities. Then the third list, that of 1498, would represent a final settlement, made no doubt after much disputing, and to prevent a recurrence of the same, in which the courteurs, the Mayor of Bullring, and ten guilds* (ship-carpenters, salmon-takers, cloth-shearers, bakers, slaters, cooks, masons, house-carpenters, tanners, and embroiderers) obtained recognition. It is well known that in England cycles frequently changed their length: sometimes guilds were admitted; at other times they dropped out, through poverty or other reasons; or again, several guilds, in order to save expense, would club together to produce a single play.

Here arises an interesting problem! Do the above three lists represent the cycle of Corpus Christi plays acted in Dublin? Or do they merely represent the order in which the various city guilds were to go with their "pageants" or moveable stages, in the Corpus Christi procession? And if the latter be correct, were any mystery plays at all acted in Dublin? Mr Waterhouse (*op. cit.* p. xlv) considers that from (1) the phraseology, (2) the irregular Scriptural order of the pageants, and (3) the inclusion of profane subjects, these were merely dumb-show accompaniments of the Corpus Christi procession. He thinks, too, that the irrational order of the pageants is explained by the supposition that they were arranged, not according to subject, but according to the rank of the guilds, each of which would jealously see that it got a place in the procession befitting its dignity.

That seems a plausible theory. But, if it be accepted, it by no means shuts out the possibility of a cycle of mystery plays having been performed in the streets of Dublin at Corpus Christi, though, strange as it may seem, we have

* Perhaps only eight. Harris's language is puzzling. He says "Mariners and Vintners, Noah and the persons in the Ark, apparelled in the habits of Carpenters and Salmon-takers". This would seem to imply that four guilds (not two) were connected with the pageant of the Flood.

very little direct evidence for such, or for the existence of a cycle at all.* But in Kilkenny plays were acted, and a book of plays was in existence as late as 1637. And it can scarcely be supposed that Dublin, with its literary tastes and cultured citizens, would have been content with mere dumb-shows, but would have had plays as well. If this be correct, it may be assumed that each guild, or group of guilds, brought as its pageant in the procession the representation of the play it would subsequently perform. Accordingly, a conjectural reconstruction of the Dublin cycle as it existed in 1498 may here be attempted.

Glovers—Temptation and Fall.

Shoemakers—Cain and Abel.

Mariners, vintners, ship-carpenters, and salmon-takers—The Flood.

Weavers—The Sacrifice of Isaac.

Smiths, cloth-shearers, bakers, slaters, cooks, and masons—The Exodus.

Merchants—Processus Prophetarum.

Coopers—The Coming of the Shepherds.

Goldsmiths—The coming of the Wise Men.

Skinners, house-carpenters, tanners, and embroiderers—The Return from Egypt.

Barbers—The Trial before Annas and Caiaphas.

Tailors—The Trial before Pilate.

Butchers†—The Crucifixion.

Corpus Christi Guild—The Three Maries.

Fishers—The Twelve Apostles.‡

And perhaps there should be added to these

Courteours—Arthur and his Knights.

Mayor of Bullring—The Nine Worthies.

* In 1554 the guild of Merchant Tailors paid Stephen Basse (Casse) 2*d.* Irish for playing Pilate on Corpus Christi Day; for gloves and "trayels" (?) for Pilate, 9*d.* Irish; for his dinner and his lady's, 12*d.* Irish (*Journal of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 1918, p. 22). This seems to be direct evidence for a *play* in contradistinction to a mere dumb-show.

† In the pageant they represented the Tormentors. Thus their play may have been the Crucifixion, for in the Wakefield play dealing with that subject the greater part of the action is carried out by the three Torturers.

‡ Perhaps identical with the Deaths of the Apostles as acted on Hoggin Green in Dublin in 1528.

Thus in the Dublin cycle, as conjecturally constructed, there were not included those widely popular pieces, the Creation, the Harrowing of Hell, and the Last Judgment. The pageant in the charge of the Skinners, etc., is puzzling. We have already quoted the passage referring to them. The corresponding passage in Gilbert (p. 241) runs as follows: "Skinners and house-carpenters, the body of the camel. Stainers and Painters to paint the camel. The camel with the Children of Israel: his head, skins, and thongs, to maintain the drawing of the camel with Our Lady. The Porters to bear the camel". Harris in his list merely has: "Skinners: the camel with the Children of Israel". Apparently there were *two* camels; while the pageant (at all events) may have given a representation of the *two* exoduses from Egypt, viz. that of Moses with the Children of Israel, and that of Joseph with the Virgin and Child.

The plays of this conjectural Dublin cycle were, we may suppose, composed by some literary citizens, cleric or lay, but not a single line is extant. There is in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, a manuscript play of *Abraham and Isaac*, which dates from about 1458, and which was at one time supposed to have formed part of the Dublin cycle. The opinion now held is that it was connected with Northampton, not with Dublin.*

There are allusions to the performance of non-cycle plays on certain occasions in the city. Harris (chap. vii) says that it was an ancient custom in Dublin on the great festivals of the year to invite the Lord Deputy, the nobility, and persons of rank, to an entertainment, at which they first diverted them with stage plays, and then regaled them with a sumptuous banquet. Thus in 1528 Piers Butler, Earl of Ossory, Lord Justice of Ireland, was invited to a new play every day at Christmas, wherein

The Tailors acted Adam and Eve.

The Shoemakers the story of Crispin and Crispian.

* Text in Waterhouse, *op. cit.* p. 26, and *Anglia*, Band xxi.

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The Vintners acted Bacchus and his story.

The Carpenters that of Joseph and Mary.

The Smiths acted Vulcan and what related to him.

The Bakers the comedy of Ceres.

The stage was erected on Hoggin Green (now College Green), and on it the Priors of St John of Jerusalem, of the Holy Trinity, and of All Hallows, caused two plays to be acted, the one representing the Passion of Christ, the other the several deaths which the Apostles suffered.

These were single plays, though three of them (those presented by the carpenters and by the Priors) may have been taken from the conjectural cycle. It is noteworthy that as late as 1704 the tailors had a pageant (perhaps with acting) of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the scenery costing £10.* The piece represented by the shoemakers must have been a play based on the incidents in the life of their patron saint, Crispinus. He and his brother Crispianus preached in Gaul, and supported themselves by working as shoemakers; subsequently they suffered martyrdom. What was presented by the vintners, the smiths and the bakers respectively seem to have been of the nature of masques.

The pageant or play of the *Nine Worthies* appears to have been a particular favourite in Dublin, and was frequently represented. The Nine Worthies were three Jews (Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabeus), three Pagans (Hector, Alexander, and Julius Caesar), and three Christians (Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon). Dr I. Gollancz, in Appendix XIII to his *Parlement of the Three Ages*, gives the fifteenth-century text of an English mumming play on the *Nine Worthies*.

* *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (1918), p. 52. T. Sharp in his *Dissertation on the Pageants and Other Dramatic Mysteries anciently performed at Coventry*, which was printed in 1825, alludes to a book, *Florence Macarthy*, II, p. 282 (published in 1818), which says that the Corpus Christi procession continued in Dublin to a fairly recent date. "The Fringes was a procession of the trades and corporations performed in Ireland on Corpus Christi Day, even within the author's recollection. King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, with Vulcan, Venus, and Cupid, were leading persons upon this occasion."

The following notices are preserved of it. In 1498, as we have seen, the Mayor of Bullring and his followers represented the Nine Worthies in the Corpus Christi procession. During the sitting of the Parliament of 1541 it was played on Corpus Christi Day. In 1557, when Lord Deputy Sussex returned from a successful expedition against James MacDonnell, the *Six (!) Worthies* was acted; four years later, when Sussex was sworn in as Lord Lieutenant, he was invited to dinner by the Mayor, and the *Nine Worthies* was played. It may be presumed that the performance of this piece was always carried out by the Mayor of Bullring and his bachelors. In 1554 it was ordered that the Mayor of Bullring from henceforth shall have no such money as was paid by the citizens now of late for setting forth the *Nine Worthies*; but the Mayor of Bullring from thenceforth to have according to the ancient custom, and that the same pageants be not neglected by the Mayor of Bullring thereafter, on pain of 40s. to the city. And it is further ordered that those young men of the city that shall be chosen by the Mayor of Bullring for the time being to play any part of the said *Nine Worthies*, or they or any of them refusing it, to forfeit 6s. 8d. to the Mayor of Bullring. According to Stanihurst, the functionary known as the Mayor of Bullring was elected annually by the citizens to be the guardian of the unwedded youths of the city. In this capacity he had power to punish those who frequented brothels. He took his strange title from the iron ring in the Cornmarket, to which the bull to be baited was tied.*

We must now describe a show which had an intimate connection with the development of the drama. The festival of St George was celebrated with great pomp and solemnity. On this Chambers says (1, p. 221): "The medieval period had its dramatic or semi-dramatic performances, in which St George figured. These generally took the form of a 'riding'

* Harris, *History of Dublin*, chap. vii; Flood, *History of Irish Music* (4th ed.), p. 158; Gilbert, *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin*, 1, p. 440.

or procession on St George's Day, April 23rd. The conduct of the 'riding', from the end of the fourteenth century onwards, was generally in the hands of a guild, founded not as a trade-guild, but as a half-social, half-religious fraternity, for the worship of the Saint". These as a rule were merely a pageant in dumb-show, but it did occasionally happen that there were places where the performance on St George's Day took the form of a regular miracle play. In Chambers' opinion this last was not the case in Dublin.

In connection with the above there occur entries in the Corporation records of the city of Dublin, from which it appears that the principal characters were St George, the Dragon, the Emperor and Empress, and the King and Queen of Dele.

The guild of Merchant Taylors evidently took part in this, for between 1554 and 1567 we find such entries as these: Paid to the emperor and empress, 9*d.*; for their breakfast and dinner, 18*d.*; for painting the emperor's head, 8*d.*; making a sword for the emperor, 12*d.* Irish; trimming his sword, 6½*d.* In 1498 the hagardmen and husbandmen were to bear the dragon, and to repair it, on St George's Day and Corpus Christi Day. In 1558 there is an allusion to the hagardmen paying for the repair of the dragon.*

For the performance of religious plays at Kilkenny we have most satisfactory evidence from the entries in the Corporation records of that city, much more so than in the case of Dublin. We know that here a definite cycle of plays was acted, for in 1637 10*s.* Irish was paid "for copying the book of Corpus Christi plays, which book was sent to Dublin". Evidently it had become almost illegible through constant use and handling. According to the Red Book of Kilkenny a sum of £3. 13*s.* 4*d.* was paid in 1631 to William Consey, who was apparently a schoolmaster, "for teaching to read and write,

* Harris, *op. cit.* chap. vii; Gilbert, *op. cit.* i, p. 242, ii, p. 3; *Journal of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (1918), pp. 22-3. For the custom of "bearing the balls" see Gilbert, *op. cit.* ii, p. 54.

and instructing the children of the natives for the play of Corpus Christi Day".*

The earliest allusion to the mystery plays in Kilkenny is an incidental one, and is recorded for us by Lynch in his manuscript *De Historia Ecclesiae Hiberniae*. Edmund Butler, Archbishop of Cashel, died in Kilkenny in 1551, and was buried there, despite the remonstrances of his clergy, who desired that his remains should rest in Cashel Cathedral. Finding their entreaties ignored, they had recourse to other methods. Richard Cody, Treasurer of Cashel, made several attempts to steal the body, and finally succeeded in doing so at Corpus Christi in the year 1556, when the citizens of Kilkenny were occupied in watching the performance of the plays ("Civibus ad se ludis theatralibus in die corporis Christi haberi solitis recreandos intentis"). He then bore it off in triumph to Cashel Cathedral, where it was interred under a handsome altar tomb, some fragments of which are now built into the walls of the north transept.†

Between 1580 and 1639 various entries relative to payments made to the actors are found in the Corporation records. Of some of these the meaning is not always clear, at least to the present writer. In 1590 6s. was paid to St Michael and the Devil that played the Resurrection on Corpus Christi Day, eighteenpence to "the other Devil and Christ that went in stations", and ninepence to "Michael that went in stations". Amongst the actors were to be found men bearing purely Irish names, for in 1602 William Kelly and John Murphy were paid 10s. for playing Michael and Satan. In the following year a man who played "Kelfiger" got 5s. Payments for the "setting forth of the Maries"

* For the Kilkenny mystery plays see *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, II (1852-3), pp. 322 ff.; *Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland* (1884), p. 238; J. J. O'Neill, *Irish Theatrical History*, p. 2. For a mention of the Kilkenny guilds see *Journal Royal Hist. and Arch. Assn. of Ireland* (1870), p. 287.

† A transcript of Lynch's manuscript is in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, classed K. 6. 15. 16. The passage quoted is in vol. II, f. 467.

appear several times, while in 1603 the large sum of £3 was paid for their setting out and "furnishing". There is one allusion to entertainment given to the actors. In 1631 Mary Rothe (a good old Kilkenny surname) was paid 20s. "for a breakfast which was for the Young Men that acted upon the Stage on Corpus Christi Day".

With regard to the stage properties and dresses for the actors some items are preserved. In 1585 sixteenpence was paid for six pairs of gloves for Christ, St John the Evangelist, the Virgin, and the three Maries. Three years later twelvepence was spent on lace for the Maries, and sixpence on pins. In 1610 the Corporation resolved to allow 20s. for keeping the apparel used on Corpus Christi Day stations, and also the apparel of the "morries" (Maries) and the players of the Resurrection. Evidently the City Fathers took a proper pride in their dramatic entertainments! In 1588 sevenpence was paid for two "pereles"* for the sepulchre, and sixpence for making them; while in 1627 6s. 8d. was expended on a pair of wings, a coronet, and a banner for St Michael. Music, too, accompanied the performances. The musicians for the Corpus Christi play were paid 8s. in 1637, while in 1584 William Coursee (Courcy) acted and played the trumpeter's part.

From the fact that the same items are mentioned several times and also from the silence of the records, it may be inferred that the Kilkenny cycle was a very short one. It seems to have consisted of but five plays, viz.

The Temptation of Christ.

The Crucifixion.

The Three Maries.

The Resurrection of Christ.

The General Resurrection and Last Judgment.

This shortness was not exceptional; Worcester had only

* *Perele*, or *parrel* = a band of rope, chain, or iron collar, by which the middle of a yard is fastened to a mast (*N.E.D.*).

five plays, and Lincoln probably four. It is not definitely stated if the cycle was acted by the trade guilds, of which there were many in Kilkenny, but it may be assumed that they had charge of the plays.

The two days on which the plays were represented were Corpus Christi and Midsummer Eve. Plays in England were sometimes acted on or near the latter date. In the Kilkenny records there are frequent allusions to the "stations"; according to Waterhouse these were the places at which the plays were acted, and there were not necessarily as many stations as plays, e.g. the thirty-six plays of the Beverley cycle were given at six consecutive stations. In 1580 eight-pence was paid to a man for placing the stations on Corpus Christi Day "according to the conclusion of the Council and custom of the town". There appear to have been processions on the two festivals, for in 1580 a man was paid 13s. 4d. "for riding on Corpus Christi Day and Midsummer Eve". There was also an important fair held on the first of these days, and this must have attracted a large number of visitors who would come, partly to do business, partly to witness the theatrical performances. In 1632 it was ordered that the north side of the market-cross should be granted to two persons for the purpose of selling their wares during the fair-time of Corpus Christi, because their shops were then blocked up by the stations and play. In 1610 the Corporation directed that the carpenters should make rails to keep back the mob, both horse and foot, at the place where the interludes should be played. It might be noted that in 1588 the Resurrection was played in St Mary's Church on Midsummer Day.

The *Nine Worthies* appears to have been as popular in Kilkenny as in Dublin. From 1598 there are records of payments being made to actors for rendering such parts as Charlemagne, Julius Caesar, Joshua, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Hector. The acting of a "Conqueror's part" is alluded to several times. There was a Lord of Bullring in Kilkenny,

whose title was changed to "Mayor" of Bullring in 1609, and he, as in Dublin, may have acted that piece with his bachelors. He had various duties assigned to him, amongst which was that of watching the fair of Corpus Christi by night with a sufficient number of young men.

It was a curious coincidence that the first Reformed Bishop of Ossory (the cathedral and episcopal palace being in Kilkenny) should have been John Bale, well known as a writer of religious plays. He was consecrated in Dublin in February, 1553, and soon made his way to Kilkenny. Had events turned out differently, his presence in that city, where so much care was devoted to the production of mystery plays, might have opened a new and interesting chapter in Anglo-Irish literary history. For a while he and the citizens were on good terms, and on one occasion three of his plays were acted at the market cross. He says in his *Vocacyon to Ossory*: "The young men in the forenoon played a tragedy of God's Promises in the Old Law, at the market-cross, with organ, playings, and songs, very aptly. In the afternoon again they played a comedy of Saint John Baptist's Preaching, of Christ's Baptising, and of the Temptation in the Wilderness, to the small contentacion of the priests and other papists there". Each of these plays had an opening and a closing speech, which was delivered by Bale himself on the stage. But the principles of the Reformation were destined to find no acceptance in Kilkenny, and as soon as Queen Mary was proclaimed this became very evident, with the result that Bale had ultimately to fly for his life, and thus all literary possibilities came to an end.*

No doubt other towns in Ireland must have enjoyed representations of religious dramas during the period covered by this chapter, yet it would seem that no evidence for such is

* Bale's *God's Promises* is in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. 1, and in *Everyman* (Everyman's Library), p. 165; *St John Baptist* in *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. 1; *Temptation* in Grosart's *Miscellanies*, vol. 1. See Chambers, *Medieval Stage*, II, pp. 446 ff.

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forthcoming. The printed records of the Corporations of Waterford and Galway, in which one might reasonably have expected to have found references to mystery plays, are strangely silent. Possibly some students of local history may be able to fill the gap that now exists.

CHAPTER IX

FIFTEENTH-CENTURY PROSE WRITINGS

So much of the literature in the period covered by this book is anonymous that it is gratifying to meet with pieces that can be ascribed to a definite person of whose life some details can be gathered. Such is true in the case of JAMES YONGE, who describes himself as "a notary imperial, and the least of the writers and citizens of Dublin".

From recently published deeds and registers it appears that his family was for a couple of centuries closely connected with the civil and ecclesiastical life of the parish of St John's, Dublin. In 1405 James Yonge, clerk, notary public, certified that John Lytill, citizen, stated that he had been arrested and committed to prison because he had refused to sign and seal certain documents: it appears to have been a case of unjust imprisonment. In 1411 he was concerned in a grant of houses and lands and was appointed by the grantor his attorney to give possession. He and John Lytill appear to have been connected in their professional life, for in 1409 they were jointly employed to give possession of a messuage in Fishermen's Street. The last mention of Yonge occurs in 1434, when John Lytill appointed him executor to his will and left him twenty shillings for his trouble. A John Yonge (unless it be a scribal error) was also a clerk and notary public in Dublin in 1411; while in 1493 Thomas Yonge is described as a Dublin notary. Allusions to the family are found in the registers of the parish of St John the Evangelist to as late a date as 1699.*

James Yonge's claim to literary fame rests upon two works which have come down to us, the one in Latin, the other in English. It may be presumed that both come from the pen

* *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (1926), p. 48.

of the same writer, while we may also suppose that he wrote other works which are now lost.

The first of these deals with the visit paid to St Patrick's Purgatory in 1411 by a Hungarian nobleman, Laurence Rathold de Pasztho. This personage reached Dublin accompanied by a herald and a numerous retinue, as befitted his rank. He set out for the Purgatory in September, accompanied by an Italian merchant, Antonio Mannini, and after fulfilling their penance they returned to Dublin early in January, 1412.

On his return his friends and acquaintances desired that he should have the account of his experiences committed to writing, and this task was entrusted to Yonge, partly, no doubt, on account of his well-known literary abilities, and partly because he had acted in some capacity for Rathold during the latter's absence on pilgrimage. He wrote the narrative in Latin, not from the Hungarian's direct dictation, but from conversations which he had had with him.*

The piece shews us Yonge as not merely a skilful writer of Latin, but as one given somewhat to moralising, and also possessed of antiquarian tastes. It is much to his credit that he exhibits such restraint in his description of the Other-World, and that, too, at an age when the popular taste demanded that such should be crammed with lurid details.

After some preliminary matter he tells us of Rathold's arrival in Dublin, where he exhibited letters of safe-conduct from Sigismund, King of Hungary. On reaching the Purgatory he was put on a short five days' fast, and on the expiration of this was rowed in a boat to the purgatorial isle. Here Yonge digresses for a little in order to give a description of the place.

No sooner has Rathold entered the cave than he has to submit to three trials. First of all, two evil spirits drag him up and down the floor by his feet. Then a devil appears in

* The Latin text is printed in *Analecta Bollandiana*, xxvii, pp. 35 ff. See Seymour, *St Patrick's Purgatory* (Dundalk, 1918), chap. vii.

the likeness of a venerable pilgrim, who attempts to make him abjure his faith in Christ. Lastly, an evil demon comes in the appearance of a beautiful woman, who endeavours to tempt him with the lust of the flesh. To each of these stories Yonge tacks on a piece of moralising, the first of which closely resembles the poem of *Christ on the Cross* in the Kildare Poems.

Next there appears to him a beautiful youth, clad in a green robe, and a red stole over his shoulders, who reveals himself as Michael the Archangel. The pilgrim beseeches him to shew him the souls of his deceased relatives, whereupon the angel conducts him to a vast gulf filled with flame, in the depths of which countless souls were being tormented. This was Purgatory. He sees the souls of all his friends and relatives, except that of his well-beloved. The vision of her is hidden from him, and he does not see the torments in reality, but only as God has permitted him. The angel then explains the purgatorial doctrine to him, and finally conducts him to the door of the cave.

On leaving the Purgatory the Prior gives him a certificate, stating that he had fulfilled the penance in due form. This was included in, and ratified by, a covering letter from Archbishop Nicholas Fleming, of Armagh. These two interesting documents, in addition to the letter of safe-conduct from King Sigismund, are given in Yonge's work.

The second piece that can be assigned to our author is his translation of the *Secreta Secretorum*,* a work very popular in the Middle Ages, and erroneously attributed to the philosopher Aristotle. The greater portion of it was made from the French version of Jofroi of Waterford, and it is the longest extant work written in the English of the Pale in the fifteenth century; though, as we shall see, it is not the only piece that survives in that tongue. It was translated at the request of James Butler, Earl of Ormond, and Viceroy in Ireland,

* Printed in E.E.T.S. (Ex. Ser.), No. 74. See *Facsimiles of National MSS of Ireland*, part III, p. 117.

1419-22. This cannot have been done earlier than the latter year, for on p. 203 the translator alludes to an event that then occurred. It is contained in a manuscript in the Bodleian Library, classed Rawlinson B. 490.

In the dedication, which is found in the introductory portion, Yonge styles himself Ormond's "poor servant". Carew, in his note to the other version (to be alluded to later), takes this phrase literally. But it seems to be only the depreciative language of courtesy. If, as is probable, Yonge was employed in some legal or official capacity by Ormond, and as he also served Laurence Rathold, the Hungarian nobleman, this would shew that he was one of the most prominent notaries in Dublin at that period.

He commences his work thus:

To you, noble and gracious lord, James de Botillere, Earl of Ormond, lieutenant of our liege lord, King Henry the fifth, in Ireland, humbly recommendeth him your poor servant, James Yonge, to your high Worship; all times desiring in Christ your honour and profit of body and soul, and with all mine heart the Trinity beseeching that He it ever increase.

He goes on to say that chivalry is maintained by wisdom and understanding, and rulers, in order to govern well, seek guidance from philosophers.

You, in your subtilty of wit, have perceived this, and in consequence have given the command some good book of governance of princes out of Latin or French into your mother-tongue English to translate. And for as much as ever I am bound for your gracious kindly gentleness [courtesy] unto your commandment to obey, now I here translate to your sovereign Nobleness the book of Aristotle, prince of philosophers, of the governance of princes, the which book is called in Latin *Secreta Secretorum*; that is to say, the Secrets of Secrets, the which book he made to his disciple Alexander the great Emperor, conqueror of all the world.

Most of the book is taken up with the duties and responsibilities of kings. Then follow chapters on the four Cardinal Virtues, on the science of Physiognomy, and other matters. There are seventy-two chapters in all, and the moralising is

driven home by pithy stories and illustrations, some of which Yonge has taken from contemporary events in Irish history. In these he shews his hatred of the native Irish. He exhorts his patron to eradicate them. "When they fall into your hands pluck them all up by the root, as the good gardener doth the nettle". He quotes some instances of men who, because they led good lives, were given grace from God to enable them to slay the Irish and ravage their lands. The chapter entitled "Of Notaries" will afford a specimen of the language. It is supposed to be spoken by Aristotle to Alexander. The reader will bear in mind that Yonge was a notary!

Alexander, to chese the behoueth, to writte thy Pryuyteis and priuvey workys, wyse men of Parfite eloquence, and of good mynde. For that is a tokyn of a grete lorde, and a stronge argument to shewe the heynesse of thy myght, and the sotilte of thy knowleche. For the tokyn and vndyrstondynge of worde is as his spirit, and the wordes yspokyn ben as a body, but the wrytynge ys as a couertoure of the worde; and afor al thynges that he be of good feyth hit nedyth. And that he know thy wille in all thynges, and that he wylyth thy profite and honoure afor all thynges; he should be curteyse and parceuyng in his dedis, and that no man entyr in sygh of thy Preveyteis of wrytynges. And yf thou mayste fynde hym suche, pay hym well for his service, so that he hym holde apayed to do the bettyr.

In modern English it runs:

Alexander, it behoveth thee to choose wise men of perfect eloquence and of good mind to write thy secrets and privy works. For that is a token of a great lord, and a strong argument to shew the highness of thy might and the subtilty of thy knowledge. For the token and understanding of word is as his spirit, and the words spoken are as a body, but the writing is as a covering of the word. And before all things it is necessary that he (the scribe) be of good faith, and that he knows thy will in all things, and that he willet thy profit and honour before all things. He should be courteous and perceiving in his actions, and (take care that) no man enter into sight of thy secrets of writings. And if thou mayest find him such, pay him well for his service, so that he hold himself satisfied to do the better.

Yonge concludes his work with the following prayer and couplet:

From all manner of mischief God defend our liege lord, King Henry the fifth, and James the Botillere, Earl of Ormond, his lieutenant of Ireland, which this book to translate me commanded. And grant them, Great God, and all their subjects, in the Seven Virtues' grace all times to grow. Amen. *Laus Deo clementissimo.*

I thanked be God, that is so hend [gracious]
That of this work hath made an end.

Another version of Yonge's translation is found in Carew MSS 633.* In an introductory passage in Carew's handwriting it is attributed to *John Yonge*, servant to the Earl of Ormond: but this is a slip of the pen, for both in this and in the other text the writer calls himself *James*.

Only the introduction and the last chapter have been printed in the *Calendar of Carew MSS*, though Heuser (p. 218) has printed chapter 34. The spelling differs considerably from the text already considered. The concluding chapter ends with the following prayer and couplet:

And from all manner of mischief Almighty God defend now us, and all that be alive in God in good virtues; and all that be in ill life Almighty God send them grace that they may be amended into a better life. Amen.

Explicit, with much ado,
I pray God never sorrow my heart come to.

A footnote states that all after the word *Explicit* was added by a later hand.

Something must now be said respecting other specimens of English prose of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the library of Trinity College, Dublin, there is a manuscript (E. 2. 31) which contains an English version of the *Conquest of Ireland*, dated about 1425. It is not a literal translation, but rather a free rendering, of the *Expugnatio Hibernica* of Giraldus Cambrensis. It contains some curious verbal forms,

* *Calendar of Carew MSS (Book of Howth)*, p. 331.

and was written by an Irish scribe. Another version of the same piece, and one easier to read, is found in a Bodleian manuscript (Rawlinson B. 490), dated about 1440. This latter version has been attributed to the pen of James Yonge, mainly, it would appear, because it precedes his *Secreta* in that manuscript. But it does not seem to resemble his style. Both texts are very valuable for a study of the English as written in Ireland at that period, and it is interesting to note that both contain forms of words which are identical with the "brogue" of the present day, e.g. "dure" (door), "haryme" (harm), "ather" (either), "ayse" (ease), etc.*

Two short parallel passages, from chapter iv, will shew the difference in style. The first passage is taken from the Dublin manuscript, the second from the Bodleian manuscript, and in the latter the modern forms of words are put in square brackets.

Whan this sekernessee was thus ymaked, these twey maner folkes, with oon will, and with oon hert, with baners ilaced, nam the wey toward weysford. The men of the self ton weren ywar of har commyng, and tok ham to rede—for the other weren so few, and day so many—that thay wold figth with ham in the pleyne felde. They cam out of the ton arraied on har manner; bot whan thay saw the Englismen, with hors ihelled with yren harnes, hamself well iwepned with haubergeons, and bright helmes and sheldes, wich the sawe never thertofor, they toke another rede, and turned ageyn to ton; and all that was without the walles they sett afyr and brent, and redied ham to hold ham withyne the wallys with streynthe.

Whan this sekyrnysse [security] was thus madd, this two maner [of] pepyll, wyth on wyll, and with oon herte, with baners lacyd [embroidered?] toke ther wey towards weysford [Wexford]. The men of the toun weryn yware of thare comynge, and toke them to consayll—for the othyr weren so few, and thay so many—that thay wolde fight with ham [them] in the playn [open] felde. Thay come out of the town arrayed on ther maner; but when they sawe the Englysh men, with hors yhelld [horses covered] with iryn harneys [armour], hamselfe well wepenyd with haubergeons [coats

* Both texts are printed in E.E.T.S. (Or. Ser.), No. 107.

of mail] and bryght salletis [light helmets] and sheldys, whych thay sawe never theretofore, thay toke anothyr consayll, and turned ayayn to town; and al that was without the wallis, thay sette afyre and brente; and arrayed tham to kepe ham within the wallis with streynth.

There is a Latin text of the *Conquest* in MS Harley 177, which would seem to have been written by an English settler in Ireland, as it gives English renderings of the Irish names.* The English version in Carew MS 598, attributed to THOMAS BRAY,† should also be noticed; the editor thinks that Bray followed the Dublin manuscript, E. 2. 31. It dates from the fifteenth century, and as a specimen of its English we shall quote the passage corresponding to that already quoted from the other two versions.

Whane this sikirnes was thus made, this two manner pepile with one wylle and with one herte, with baneris lacid toke thar way toward Wexforde. The men of the towne weryne so fewe, and thay so many, that thay wold fyght wythe thame yn the playne feelde. Thay come out of the toune arayed on there manner; but whene thay sawe the Englyschmen with hors y hellid with irne harneys, thame selff well weppned with haberyones and brygt salletis and sheldis, which thay sawe never to forne, thay toke another consayle and turned agayne to toune. And all that was without the wallis thay sete a fyre and brente, and arrayed thame to kepe hame withyne the wallis.

But the most valuable and interesting of the works that remain from this period is that remarkable compilation known as the *Book of Howth*. It appears that at one time it was preserved among the archives of Dublin Castle. In some unknown way it passed into the hands of Sir George Carew, and is now housed in the library at Lambeth Palace. It is in thirteen different handwritings, all of which are said to be contemporaneous; they belong to the sixteenth century.

* An Irish text of the abridged version of the *Expugnatio* is printed in *English Historical Review*, xx, p. 77. Philip of Slane, who became Bishop of Cork in 1321, made between 1316 and 1326 an abridgment of the *Topographia Hiberniae*; this is in the British Museum Add. MS 19513, written in Italy. See Dimock, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, v (1867), p. lxxv, and *Romania*, i (1872), p. 385.

† This is printed in the *Book of Howth* (*Cal. of Carew MSS*).

Very varied are its contents. It has a version of the *Conquest of Ireland*, and carries on the history of the country to the last quarter of the sixteenth century. It tells us, too, of Fionn macCumhail, of St Patrick, and of the false prophet "Machoment"; it has chapters or paragraphs dealing with giants, with double-meaning answers given by spirits (like the oracles of classical times), with the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, with the siege of Rhodes, and so on. The compilers have gone to many sources for their strange and varied information. All is told in a delightful manner, and the book is full of vigour and feeling, of humorous passages, and of arresting descriptions of prominent personages and their sayings and doings.

Here is a passage from the description of Ireland:

There been fairies little of body, and full hardy and strong. There been barnacles, fowls like wild geese, which grows wondrously upon trees, as it were nature wrought against kind. Men of religion eat barnacles upon fasting days, because they be not engendered with flesh, wherein, as me thinketh, they err, for reason is against that; for if a man had eat of Adam's legs he had eaten flesh, and yet Adam was not engendered of father nor mother; but flesh cometh wondrously of the tree.

In this land is plenty of honey and milk. Solinus and Ysydor write that Ireland hath no bees; nevertheless, it were better written that Ireland had bees and no vineyards. Beda saith that there is great hunting to roebucks; and it is known that there hath been none. It is no wonder of Beda, for he never saw that land, but some men told him such tales. Also there groweth that stone Saxagonus, and is called in Irish also, as it were, the rainbow. If that stone be holden against the sun, anon it shall shape a rainbow. There is also founden a stone that is called Gagathes, and white margery pearls.

One might quote pages full of quaint and striking passages. We shall content ourselves, however, with one more. In 1301 four Irish kings were fighting against the English. These kings sent some poor men as spies to the English camp

to behold what order and what they could hear of them, and to understand their doing. These poor men beholding the English-

men eating loaves of bread and red wine, they returned and told that they saw many tall men and strong countenance men, and in especial in eating their meat. "We perceive also by them that they lack victual, for they feed like dogs, for their meat is children's heads, and their drink is men's blood, with stout, bold, and grim countenance, as though they were eating flesh and butter, or honey and butter together. We see none other victual they have." The kings perceived this order in all things, and knew it was loaves of bread and wine they spoke of.

CHAPTER X

RICHARD STANIHURST

AN entire chapter may fittingly be devoted to RICHARD STANIHURST, oddest of English writers, odd enough in his prose, eccentric in his verse productions. He is usually claimed as belonging to English literature; but when we bear in mind that by birth, upbringing, and education he belonged to Ireland, there can be little doubt but that we are quite justified in including him in a work dealing with Anglo-Irish writers and their productions.

He was born in Dublin in 1547, and came of a family that was closely connected with the civic life of that city, a family, too, in which the writing instinct persisted for a couple of generations. In 1470 a merchant, Richard Stanihurst, was a buyer for, and in 1492 Treasurer of, the city of Dublin. Another was a scholar of Oxford. Another member, NICHOLAS, who died in 1554, and who is said to have been our author's grandfather, wrote in Latin *Dietam Medicorum*. Our author's father, JAMES, was a very distinguished man. He was Recorder of Dublin, and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons in the parliaments of 1557, 1560, and 1568. At the opening of each of these he delivered an oration, which was written in English. He also composed in Latin *Piae Orationes* and *Ad Corcagiensem decanum epistolas plures*; these last were addressed to THOMAS O'HEIRNAN or O'HIFERNAN, Dean of Cork, who wrote in reply *Ad Jacobum Stanihurstum epistolas plures*. He was a man of no narrowed outlook, as he recommended a system of education for Ireland, and suggested the formation of a university for Dublin, though with regard to this nothing was done until after his death. Edmund Campion the Jesuit was a close friend of his, and acknowledged having received much assistance from his conversation, and from

his collection of books and manuscripts, in the writing of his *History*. He died in Dublin, in 1573, aged fifty-one. One of his daughters, Margaret, married Arnold Usher, one of the six clerks of the Irish Court of Chancery, and became the mother of the celebrated Archbishop Usher; thus the latter was nephew to our author.

Richard Stanihurst's brother, WALTER, translated into English *Innocentius de Contemptu Mundi*. Finally, by his second wife, our author had a son, WILLIAM, who was born at Brussels in 1601 and died in 1663. At the age of sixteen he became a member of the Society of Jesus. He wrote several theological works in Latin, which have been printed.

Our author received his early education from Peter White, "the lucky schoolmaster of Munster", who was the most celebrated teacher of his day. He was born in Waterford, and educated at Oxford, where he was elected a Fellow of Oriel College in 1551. In 1566 he was appointed to the Deanery of Waterford, but was ejected some time after for refusing to conform. Before this, and apparently after this, he taught in the grammar school which had been founded in the west end of St Canice's churchyard, Kilkenny, by the Earl and Countess of Ormond. Here Stanihurst passed his schooldays. Of this worthy pedagogue, and his admirable methods of dealing with his boys, we shall allow his quondam pupil to tell in his own words.

Out of this school have sprouted such proper imps, through the painful diligence, and the laboursome industry of a famous lettered man, Mr Peter White, as generally the whole weal public of Ireland, and especially the southern parts of that Island, are greatly thereby furthered. This gentleman's method in training up youth was rare and singular, framing the education according to the scholar's vein. If he found him free, he would bridle him like a wise Isocrates from his book; if he perceived him dull, he would spur him forward; if he understood that he were the worse for beating, he would win him with rewards: finally, by interlacing study with recreation, sorrow with mirth, pain with pleasure, sourness with sweetness, roughness with mildness, he had so good success in schooling his pupils, as in good sooth I may boldly bide

by it, that in the realm of Ireland was no grammar school so good, in England I am well assured none better. And because it was my happy hap (God and my parents be thanked) to have been one of his crew, I take it to stand with my duty, sith I may not stretch mine ability in requiting his good turns, yet to manifest my good will in remembering his pains. And certes, I acknowledge myself so much bound and beholding to him and his, as for his sake I reverence the meanest stone cemented in the walls of that famous school.

As Trinity College, Dublin, was not yet in being, Stanihurst, like so many Irish lads, went to Oxford, and entered University College in 1563. At the age of eighteen he gave proof of his scholarship and ability, not to say his precocity, by writing Latin commentaries on Porphyry, "to the great admiration of learned men and others". After taking his degree he studied law first at Furnival's Inn, and afterwards at Lincoln's Inn. Then he returned to Ireland with Campion as his tutor, and, devoting himself to historical work, contributed a *Description of Ireland*, and a *History of Ireland during the reign of Henry VIII* to the first volume of Holinshed's great series of *Chronicles*. This volume appeared in 1577.

He married Janet, or Genet, daughter of Sir Christopher Barnewall, and removed to Knightsbridge. She died there in August, 1579, and was buried at Chelsea. After her death Stanihurst left England for the Low Countries, and seems never to have returned. His biographer, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, says that the date of his conversion to Roman Catholicism is undetermined, but that it probably took place soon after he arrived on the Continent. But is there anything to shew that Stanihurst had ever been a Protestant? His father had been a Roman Catholic, but had changed his religious views; but he had his son educated by Peter White, who was an ardent supporter of Roman Catholicism. In absence of direct evidence to the contrary, we are doubtful if our author ever held the principles of the Reformation.

At first he resided at Leyden, and there published in 1582

his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* I-IV, with other poetical pieces. Then he removed to Antwerp, and there published (in 1584) his Latin work on the early history of Ireland down to the time of Henry II; while at the same place in 1587 he produced his *De Vita S. Patricii*. During his stay in Flanders and Spain he is said to have become involved in conspiracies against the English Government, and was watched by English spies.

During his stay in Holland he seems to have formed an attachment for a pretty brunette, named Mary, who resided at The Hague, and who inspired some of his shorter poems. He says that though Nature sometimes makes deformed and hideous men and women, yet on this occasion she formed "a peerless paragon", going to Holland, and

Round to the Hague posting, to the world *Mary* matchless
advancing.

In body fine fashioned, a brave Brounetta; well handled;
Her stature is comely; not an inch too superfluous holding;
Gracious in visage; with a quick eye prettily glancing;
Her lips like coral ruddy, with teeth lily white evened.
Young in age, in manners and nurture sage she remaineth;
Bashful in her speaking, not rash, but watchful in answer;
Her looks, her simpering, her words with courtesy sweetening;
Kind and also modest; liking with chastity linking;
And in all her gestures observing comely decorum.

He says elsewhere that she excelled in three special gifts:

Comeliness of person the first rank rightly retaineth;
Courtesy keeps the second; the third row *Chastity* claimeth.

In her book he wrote a device in Latin, which he Englished as follows:

The fine Hague excelleth with lustres sundry reshining,
The Sun hath his brightness in *Mary* wholly placéd.

On his part this was only intended to be a platonic friendship, though it would seem that the lady's mother was anxious to bring about a match, to which *Mary* herself seems not to have been averse.

RICHARD STANIHURST

If we met in walking, what scarlet blush she resembled?
Her colour oft altereth; with love's hot palsy she trembleth.
Back goeth her eye glancing; a sigh heard; moods changeable
uttered.

Stanihurst, however, being unwilling to enter on matrimony, and not wishing to compromise her, felt himself bound to separate from her. All this we gather from the curious introduction prefixed to a poem, from which the last-quoted passage is taken.

The lover long sought unto by his friend, at last repaireth to her presence; and after a few meetings smelling the drift of the mother, which erst he did forecast, to tend to the preferring of her daughter in marriage, refraineth the gentlewoman's company, though eftsoons to the contrary solicited, as one unwilling to marry at all, and very loath to mar so courteous a dame; and therefore, for the preservation of her honour, and to avoid the encumbrance of love, he curbeth affection with discretion.

However, before 1585 he married Helen, daughter of William Copley, of Gatton, Surrey. By her he had two sons, Peter, the elder, and William, both of whom became Jesuits. His wife died about 1602, soon after the birth of the second son. After this Stanihurst took holy orders in the Roman Catholic Church. His later Latin works, which were theological and controversial, were brought out between 1609 and 1615; and he is said to have died at Brussels in 1618.*

His three English works, as already noted, were his *Description of Ireland*, his *Continuation of the Chronicles of Ireland*† (only covering the reign of Henry VIII), and his volume containing his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* I–IV, together with some other poems and translations‡; amongst these are some Latin pieces, while in the sixth chapter of his *Description* are epigrams in Latin upon certain of the nobility, which evidently were composed by Stanihurst himself.

* Stanihurst's translation of Virgil, and poems (ed. Arber, 1895); Harris's Ware's *Writers of Ireland*, pp. 94, 98, 99; *Dictionary of National Biography*.

† Both these are in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, vol. VI (edition of 1808).

‡ Edited by E. Arber in *English Scholar's Library* (Constable, London, 1895).

In the Epistle Dedicatory to Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy of Ireland, which is prefixed to his *Description*, he tells us why he undertook the work. He says that lately some persons had busied themselves in "culling and packing together the scrapings and fragments of the History of Ireland". Amongst these were "my fast friend and inward companion, Mr Edmund Campion". It is difficult to catch Stanihurst's meaning, as his phraseology is so peculiar, but it would seem that Campion's work was so "huddled up in haste" that it received adverse criticism. For this reason, Stanihurst resolved to enrich Campion's chronicle with further additions.

But weighing on the other side, that my coarse packthread could not have been suitably knit with his fine silk, and what a disgrace it were, bunglerly to botch up a rich garment, by clouting it with patches of sundry colours, I was forthwith reclaimed from my former resolution, reckoning it for better, that my pen should walk in such wise in that craggy and balkish way, as the truth of the matter being forepriced, I would neither openly borrow, nor privily embezzle, ought to any great purpose from his History.

This seems to mean that he started writing Irish history on his own account, altogether independent of Campion's work. But as he was "hammering that work by stealth on the anvil", he learnt that "others had brought our raw history to that ripeness as my pain therein would seem but needless". This apparently refers to the work already done by Holinshed and those who assisted him in the volume dealing with Ireland. Accordingly he says that he was content "to leave them thumping in the forge, and quietly to repair to mine usual and pristinate studies, taking it not to stand with good manners, like a flittering fly, to fall in another man his dish".

However, the rumour of the historical work he had done came to the ears of those who were busied with the compilation and publication of the volume of Holinshed dealing with Ireland. "The gentlemen conceiving a greater opinion of me, than I was well able to uphold, dealt very effectually

with me, that as well at their instance, as for the affection I bare to my native land, I would put mine helping hand to the building and perfecting of so commendable a work." After weighing the matter for a few days he agreed to comply with their request. This is borne out by Holinshed in the introduction to the Irish volume. He says that having carried on the history with some difficulty to the commencement of the reign of Henry VIII, "some of those that were to bestow the charges of the impression procured a learned gentleman, Master Richard Stanihurst, to continue it from thence forward as he saw occasion, being furnished with matter to enlarge the work whereof for these latter times I found myself utterly void, more than that which Campion had delivered".

Then, addressing Sidney, Stanihurst apologises for the rudeness of his treatise. Yet, as an "expert lapidary", he, if he gives his leisure to reading it, may

find therein stones of such estimation as are worthy to be couched [arranged] in rich and precious collets [that part of a ring in which stones are set]. And in especially your lordship, above all others, in that you have the charge of that country, may here be schooled by a right line to level your government. For in perusing this history you shall find vice punished, virtue rewarded, rebellion suppressed, loyalty exalted, haughtiness disliked, courtesy beloved, bribery detested, justice embraced, polling [extortionate] officers to their perpetual shame reprov'd, and upright governors to their eternal fame extolled.

One would imagine that he was writing a History of Utopia!

He says that though there may be some persons whose stomachs may be too nice to allow them to digest the history of so base a country, yet he feels assured that Sidney, "who is thoroughly acquainted with the worthiness of the Island, will be soon persuaded to leave such quaint and licorous repastours to feed on their costly and delicate woodcocks, and willingly to accept the loving present of your hearty well-wisher".

The *Description* itself is divided into eight chapters, and deals with such matters as the customs and language of the people, the lords temporal and spiritual, the cities and sea-ports, the authors, the wonders, and the natural resources.

Despite his religion (as the present writer believes), Stanihurst's sympathies lay altogether with the English. In some respects his attitude is a very modern one. He dislikes immensely the rapid spread that the Irish language was then making through the country. He says that the Pale has become much contracted, partly through the encroachments of the native Irish.

The inhabitants of the English Pale have been so much addicted to their civility, and so far sequestered from barbarous savageness, as that their only mother tongue was English. And truly so long as these impaled dwellers did sunder themselves as well in land as in language from the Irish, rudeness was day by day in the country supplanted, civility ingrafted, good laws established, loyalty observed, rebellion suppressed, and, in fine, the scion of a young England was like to shoot in Ireland. But when their posterity became not altogether so wary in keeping, as their ancestors were valiant in conquering, the Irish language was free denizen in the English Pale: this canker took such deep root, as the body that before was whole and sound was by little and little festered and in manner wholly putrified. Here perchance some snappish carper will take me at rebound, and snuffingly snib [reprimand] me for debasing the Irish language; but truly whosoever shall be found so overthwartly [adversely] bent he takes the matter far awry. For as my skill is very simple therein, so I would be loth to disveil my rashness in giving light verdict in any thing to me unknown: but only my short discourse tendeth to this draft, that it is not expedient that the Irish tongue shall be so universally gagged in the English Pale: because that by proof and experience we see, that the Pale was never in more flourishing estate than when it was wholly English, and never in worse plight than since it hath enfranchised the Irish.

But, although opposed to the spread of what might almost be termed "compulsory" Irish, he is quite ready to stand up for the honour of his country if anyone attempts to traduce it. He raises the question as to whether Ireland's

immunity from snakes is due to the efforts of St Patrick, or to some peculiar property in the soil. He says that he himself would be lukewarm in the matter

were it not that one master Alan Cope, or some other that masketh under his visours, more slanderously than pithily had busied himself therein. Wherefore, sith I may with better warrant defend my native country, than he or his betters may reprove it, especially when his slanderous reports are underpropt with flim flam surmises; I purpose under master Cope his correction to cope and buckle with him herein: and before he bear the ball to the goal, to trip him if I may in the way.

The book is in the form of a dialogue between Irenaeus, an Englishman, and Critobulus, a German.* The former alludes to the story of St Paul and the viper at Malta (Acts xxviii, 3-6) and says that through the gift of that saint all scorpions and other venomous creatures in that island have become harmless.

Critobulus replies,

Now I call to mind, that I have read and often heard, that the like benefit hath been imparted to Ireland, through the prayers of Saint Patrick the apostle of the said island, that is to say, that Ireland breedeth no venomous worm. And thereupon percase [perchance] some are accustomed to say, that there is no poisonous or venomous thing in Ireland but only the people, which is taken to have been said of most men for their brutish and savage manners.

Irenaeus answers,

I ascribe that property not to Saint Patrick but to the nature of the soil, because it hath been known long before Saint Patrick was born that Ireland was endued with that property.

That is enough for Stanihurst! He devotes several pages to the castigation of Cope, both in his own person, and in those of his two speakers. He says it is unthinkable that St Patrick would have spent his time dispossessing the country of snakes and left its inhabitants still possessed of

* *Dialogi sex contra Pontificatus, Monasticae vitae, Sanctorum, Sacrarum imaginum oppugnatores et pseudomartyres . . . nunc primum . . . ab Alano Copo editi* (Antverpiae, 1566).

devils. Nor need Critobulus harp upon the rude manners of the Irish—his own fellow-countrymen, the Germans, are notorious for their brutish drunken excesses.

Ireland, and especially the ruder part, is not stored with such learned men as Germany is. If they had sound preachers, and sincere livers, that by the embalming of their carrion souls with the sweet and sacred flowers of holy writ, would instruct them in the fear of God, in obeying their prince, in observing the laws, in underpropping in each man his vocation the weal public: I doubt not, but within two or three ages Mr Critobulus his heirs should bear so good a report run of the reformation of Ireland as that it would be reckoned as civil as the best part of Germany. Let the soil be as fertile as any would wish, yet if the husbandman will not manure it, it will bring forth weeds. So it fareth with the rude inhabitants of Ireland, they lack universities, they want instructors, they are destitute of teachers, they are without preachers, they are devoid of all such necessities as appertain to the training up of youth: and notwithstanding all these wants, if any would be so frowardly set as to require them to use such civility as other regions that are sufficiently furnished with the like helps; he might be accounted as unreasonable as he that would force a cripple that lacketh both his legs to run, or one to pipe or whistle a galiard [lively tune] that wanteth his upper lip.

In view of the foregoing it seems hardly fair to say, as Geoffrey Keating does, that Stanihurst set himself deliberately to blacken the native Irish.

We may now pass on to some other points. Here is his description of Dublin.

This city, as it is not in antiquity inferior to any city in Ireland, so in pleasant situation, in gorgeous buildings, in the multitude of people, in martial chivalry, in obedience and loyalty, in manners and civility, it is superior to all other cities and towns in that realm. And therefore it is commonly called the Irish or young London. The seat of this city is of all sides pleasant, comfortable, and wholesome. If you would traverse hills, they are not far off. If champion ground [level country], it lieth of all parts. If you would be delighted with fresh water, the famous river called the Liffy, named of Ptolomy Lybnum, runneth fast by. If you will take the view of the sea, it is at hand.

It is only right to remember that however true the above description may be, the city would be greatly disfigured (in modern eyes) by crooked narrow streets, ill-paved and worse-lighted, filled with dirt of every description, and by no means free from roving animals.

He gives us a very interesting picture of Waterford and its citizens.

This city is properly builded, and very well compact, somewhat close by reason of their thick buildings and narrow streets. The haven is passing good, by which the citizens through the intercourse of foreign traffic in short space attain to abundance of wealth. The soil about it is not all of the best, by reason of which the air is not very subtil, yea nathless the sharpness of their wits seemeth to be nothing rebated or dulled by reason of the grossness of the air. For in good sooth the townsmen are pregnant in conceiving, quick in taking, and sure in keeping. The citizens are very heedy and wary in all their public affairs, slow in the determining of matters of weight, loving to look ere they leap. In choosing their magistrate they respect not only his riches, but they also weigh his experience. And therefore they elect for their Mayor neither a rich man that is young, nor an old man that is poor. They are cheerful in the entertainment of strangers, hearty one to another, nothing given to factions. They love no idle bench whistlers, nor luskish faitors [lazy vagabonds]: for young and old are wholly addicted to thriving.

Finally, we may quote some of Stanihurst's words on the resources of the country:

Ireland is stored of cows, of excellent horses, of hawks, of fish, and of fowl. They are not without wolves, and greyhounds to hunt them, bigger of bone and limb than a colt. Their cows, as also the rest of their cattle, and commonly what else soever the country engendereth (except man) is much less in quantity than those of England or other realms. Sheep, few, and those bearing coarse fleeces, whereof they spin notable rug [coarse frieze].

He distinguishes three sorts of horses, viz. a nag or hackney, which is very good for travelling; horses of service, which appear to have been used for war; and a hobby, which was between the two.

His remarks on the natural resources of the country, and the attitude of the inhabitants with respect to them, are not without significance at the present day.

There are in this island such notable quarries of grey marble and touch [costly marble], such store of pearl and other rich stores, such abundance of coal, such plenty of lead, iron, latin [mixed metal?] and tin, so many rich mines furnished with all kinds of metals, as nature seemed to have framed this country for the storehouse or jewelhouse of her chiefest thesaure. Howbeit she hath not shewed herself so bountiful a mother in pouring forth such riches as she proveth herself an envious stepdame: in that she instilleth into the inhabitants a drowsy litherness [sluggishness] to withdraw them from the insearching of their hoarded and hidden jewels.

To his *Continuation of the Chronicles of Ireland* (reign of Henry VIII) Stanihurst prefixes another Epistle Dedicatory to Sir Henry Sidney. In this he says,

How cumbersome and dangerous a task it is, to engross and divulge the doings of others, especially when the parties registered or their issue are living: both common reason sufficiently acknowledged, and daily experience infallibly proveth. For man by course of nature is so partially affected to himself and his blood, as he will be more aggrieved with the chronicler for recording a peevish trespass than he will be offended with his friend for committing a heinous treason.

Stanihurst has evidently experienced some severe criticism, for he considers that the historian can please no one. Let him be either long or short, pleasant or grave, commending or reproving, he will always find some who will be more ready to "blab forth his pelfish faults than they will be ready to blaze out his good deserts"; while others will be quick to point out anything that is omitted or not fully dealt with. For these reasons some historiographers have shrunk back from their task; others, being stout-hearted men, contemptuously trample their critics underfoot, and do not hesitate to "buskle forward, and rush through the pikes of their quipping nips [taunting sarcasm] and biting frumps [jeers]". But as for his own attitude, he says, "Taking the

mean between both these extremities, I held it for better, not to be so faint and peevish a meacock [coward] as to shrink and couch [cower] my head for every mizzling shower, nor yet to bear myself so high in heart as to prance and jet like a proud jennet through the street, not weighing the barking of currish bandogs". If faults be found in his *History*, he declares that they come of ignorance, and not of set wilfulness; though he admits that he was unwilling "to write every trim tram (trifle) that I knew to be said or done. I have laid down here to the reader his view, a brief discourse, whereof I trust he shall take no great surfeit. Thus betaking your lordship to God, I crave your attentiveness in perusing a cantle or parcel of the Irish history that here ensueth".

On the *Continuation* itself not much need be said. It forms a pleasantly-written and easily-read account of the principal events in Ireland during the reign of Henry VIII. He tells us of the strife between the Earls of Kildare and Ormond, and of their shaking hands through a hole cut in the door of the chapter-house in St Patrick's Cathedral, which holed door may still be seen. He gives us the character, and an illustrative anecdote, of that Earl of Kildare.

He was open and plain, hardly able to rule himself when he were moved to anger, not so sharp as short, being easily displeased, and sooner appeased. Being in a rage with certain of his servants for faults they committed, one of his horsemen offered master Boyse (a gentleman that retained to him) an Irish hobby [middle-sized horse] if he would pluck an hair from the earl his beard. Boyse, taking the offer at rebound, stepped to the Earl (with whose good-nature he was thoroughly acquainted), parching in the heat of his choler, and said, "So it is, and if it like your good lordship, one of your horsemen promised me a good horse, if I snip one hair from your beard". "Well," quoth the Earl, "I agree thereto, but if thou pluck any more than one, I promise thee to bring my fist from thine ear."

Stanihurst gives us, too, a vivid account of Kildare's trial before Cardinal Wolsey, of the rebellion of Silken Thomas, and of the travels on the Continent of the young Earl, the

hope of the house of Kildare, accompanied by his tutor and guardian, Thomas Leverous. On the Irish at the siege of Boulogne he has an interesting passage. They made excellent soldiers, and were most expert cattle thieves. There were seven hundred of them, and

they stood the army in very good stead. For they were not only contented to burn and spoil all the villages thereto adjoining; but they would also range twenty or thirty miles into the mainland: and having taken a bull, they used to tie him to a stake, and scorching him with faggots, they would force him to roar, so as all the cattle in the country would make towards the bull, all which they would lightly lead away, and furnish the camp with store of beef. If they took any Frenchman prisoner, lest they should be accounted covetous in snatching with them his entire body, his only ransom should be no more than his head. The French, with this strange kind of warfaring astonished, sent an ambassador to King Henry [VIII] to learn whether he brought with him men or devils, that could neither be won with rewards, nor pacified by pity.

Part of the oddness of Stanihurst's style is due to his fondness for proverbs and proverbial phrases, which are to be found on every page, and of which his translation of Virgil also furnishes many examples. We give some of them—and the reader will no doubt be surprised to see how many of them are in current use at the present day:

To be in a wrong box; to hit the nail on the head; "I weigh not two chips which way the wind bloweth"; "I served him with a dish of his own cooking"; to break the ice; neither fish, nor flesh, nor yet red herring; not worth a bean; to miss the cushion (not a metaphor from billiards; it means to sit down and miss your seat); as wild as a March hare; dog-cheap; to rule the roast (more correct than to rule the *roost*); cocksure (absolutely secure); to cast in his dish (apparently the same as to cast in his teeth); his comb was cut (i.e. Cardinal Wolsey's at his downfall); to have an oar in that boat (to have a say in that matter); the fat is in the fire; to take eggs for his money (to get out of the difficulty as best he could); tit for tat; a rod to beat their own tails;

"to give Tom Drum his entertainment, which is, to hale a man in by the head, and thrust him out by both the shoulders"; Scarborough warning (very short notice, or no notice at all); Scarborough leisure (very little leisure); in straw there lurketh some pad (a lurking danger; *pad* = toad).

But by far the oddest and most amusing specimens of Stanihurst's style are to be found in his volume of metrical translations and poems. This was dedicated to his brother-in-law, Patrick Plunket, Lord Dunsany, who had married Mary, daughter to Sir Christopher Barnewall, and so sister to Stanihurst's first wife. The volume was published at Leyden in 1582, though some of the items contained in it must have been composed before his departure to the Continent, others (as the poems to Mary) after his arrival there. In the Epistle Dedicatory he extols Virgil as being one of the greatest of Latin poets, and says that, bearing in mind what Ascham said in his *Scholemaster* about students applying their wits in beautifying the English language with heroical verses, "I held no Latinist so fit, to give the onset on as Virgil". After answering two classes of objectors, he encourages others to follow in his footsteps. "As for the general facility, this much I dare warrant young beginners, that when they shall have some firm footing in this kind of Poetry, which by a little painful exercise may be purchased, they shall find as easy a vein in the English, as in the Latin verses, yea, and much more easy than in the English rhymes." In his Introduction to the Reader

he developed the theory of English prosody of which Gabriel Harvey was the champion, maintaining that quantity rather than accent ought to be the guiding principle of English as of Latin metre. He rendered Virgil into hexameters by way of proving that proposition. The result was a literary monstrosity. The Latin was recklessly paraphrased in a grotesquely prosaic vocabulary, which abounded in barely intelligible words invented by the translator to meet metrical exigencies. Frequent inversions of phrase heightened the ludicrous effect.

One might quote from his translation of the *Aeneid* to the

wearying of the reader, so quaint is every portion of it, but we shall limit ourselves to a few very select passages. Here is a good specimen, the description of Fame in the fourth book, which we leave in the original spelling.

Fame, the groyl¹ ungentil, than whom none swifter is extant;
 Limber in her whisking: her streingth in journey she trebbleth,
 First lyke a shrimp² squatting for feare, then boldlye she roameth
 On ground prowde jetting: she soars up nimbleye toe skyward;
 The earth, her dame, chauffing³ with graund Gods celical anger,
 Littered this leveret, the syb⁴, as men sundrye rehearsed,
 Too the giant Caeus, sister to swad⁵ Encelad holden.
 Furth she quicklye galops, with wingflight swallolyke hastning.
 A foule fog⁶ pack paunch: what feathers plumye she beareth,
 So manye squint eyebals shee keeps (a relation uncouth),
 So manye tongues clapper, with her ears and lip labor eevened.
 In the dead of nightyme to the skyes shee flickereth, howling,
 Through the earth shade skipping, her sight from slumber
 amooving. (ll. 173-85)*

¹ A person ever on the move.

² A wizened person.

³ Moved with anger.

⁴ The relation.

⁵ Clownish.

⁶ Corpulent.

In the following passage Neptune rebukes the winds let loose by Aeolus:

What sirs? your boldness doth your gentility warrant?
 Dare ye low, curst baratours¹, in this my seignury regal,
 To raise such raks jaks on seas, and danger unordered?
 Well, sirs: but tempest I will first pacify raging.
 Be sure, this practice will I nick in a friendly memento².
 Pack hence, doggy rakehells, tell your king from me this errand.
 Of seas the managing was never allotted his empire.
 That charge me toucheth; but he mastereth monstrous hildens³,
 Your kennels, good sirs: let your king Aeolus haughty
 Execute his ruling in your deep dungeon hardly.

(I, ll. 132-41)

¹ Brawlers.

² Give a friendly reminder as regards their conduct.

³ Good-for-nothing beings.

In some passages his language is so quaint that it is almost impossible to believe that he was writing seriously. Yet

* The numbers in brackets refer to Conington, *P. Vergili Maronis Opera* (3 vols). The lines in Stanihurst's text are not numbered.

apparently he was. This is how he describes the filling of the wooden horse with warriors:

In this odd huge aumbry¹ they rammed a number of hardy
Tough knights, thick farcing² the ribs with clusterèd armour.

¹ Receptacle. ² Stuffing. (II, ll. 18-20)

The Trojans capture the lying Sinon, who has allowed himself to be taken by them in order that he may release the Greeks from the horse. He is

A brass bold merchant, in causes dangerous hardy.
In doubtful matters thus stands he flatly resolvèd,
Or to cog: or certain for bravery to purchase a Tyburn.

(II, ll. 61-3)

The last line is well explained by Conington's translation: "either to play off his stratagem, or to meet inevitable death".

Some passages are so worded that it is almost impossible to understand them.

From thence came a maid priest, in soil Massyla begotten,
Seixteen of Hesperides Synagogue, this sorceress usèd
For to cram the dragon: she, on trees, slips consecrat heeded.
Honey liquid sprinkling, and breed sleep wild poppy strawing.

(IV, ll. 483-6)

Again we must betake ourselves to Conington. "From that clime I have heard of a priestess of the Massylian race, once guardian of the temple of the Hesperides, who used to give the dragon his food, and so preserve the sacred boughs on the tree, sprinkling for him moist honey and drowsy poppy-seed". From this we learn that "seixteen" means "sexton"!

Our author excels himself when handling similes. Here is that well-known one of the bees in I, ll. 430-6:

Like bees in summer season, through rustical hamlets
That flirt¹ in sunbeams, and toil with mutterus humbling².
When they do forth carry their young swarm fledgy to gathering
Or cells are farcing with dulce and delicate honey:
Or porters' burdens unload, or clustered in herds swarm

¹ Dart about quickly. ² Buzzing.

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Feaze³ away the drone bees with sting, from manger, or hivecot,
The labour hot sweltereth, the combs thyme flowery besprinkleth.

³ Drive away.

Here is another (II, ll. 304-8):

Much like as in cornshucks singēd with blasterous hurling¹
Of southwind whistling: or when from mountain a rumbling
Flood rakes up furrows, ripe corn, and tillage of oxen.
Down tears it windfalls, and thick woods sturdily tumbleth.
The crack rack crashing the unwitting pastor² amazeth.

¹ Commotion. ² Shepherd.

But our translator is at his best when dealing with tragical passages. Here is his treatment of that moving description of the murder of the aged King Priam by Neoptolemus, son of Achilles (II, ll. 544-53):

The old man thus bawling, in strength clean weakened, here
hurlēd

His dart at Pyrrhus, from the armour feebly rebounding
In boss of his target¹ with flagging weakness it hangeth.
"Why then", quoth Pyrrhus, "Thou shalt be speedily posted
To coast infernal, there let my exploits be reported.
My father advertise that I was full truly begotten,
Basely Neoptolemus was born, that carry for errand".
This said, poor Priamus with force from the altar is halēd,
And then sir Pyrrhus with left hand grappled his hoarlocks,
In the blood him ducking of his own son, silly² Polites.
His blade he with thrusting in his old dwynd³ carcase uphilted.

¹ Shield. ² Innocent. ³ Withered.

We may end our selections from Stanihurst's translation of Virgil with his rendering of the magnificent passage in which Dido, maddened at the attempt of Aeneas to leave her by stealth, pours forth a stream of red-hot, half-incoherent words (IV, ll. 365-87):

No goddess is thy parent, nor th'art of Dardanus offspring,
Thou perjured faitour¹: but amidst rocks, Caucasus haggish
Bred thee, with a tiger's sour milk unseasonēd, uddered.
What shall I dissemble? What points more weighty reserve I?
At my tears showering did he sigh? Did he wink with his eyelid?

¹ Impostor.

Once did he weep vanquished? Did he yield once mercy to
lovmate?

What shall I first utter? Will not grand Juno with hastening?
Nor the father Saturn with his eyes bent rightly behold this?
Faith quite is exiled: from the shore late a runagate hedgebrat,
A tarbrech quystroun² did I take, with frenzy betrashēd
I placed in kingdom, both ships and company gracing.
Woe to me thus stamping, such brainsick foolery belching.
Mark the speech, I pray you, well couched: now soothtell Apollo,
Now Lycian's fortunes, from very Jupiter heavenly
A menacing message by the God's ambassador uttered.
Forsooth: this thy viadge with care Saints celical³ heapeth,
Their brains unquieted with this baldare⁴ be buzzing.
I stay not thy body, nor on baw vaw trumpery descant.
Pack to soil Italian; cross the seas; fish for a kingdom.
Verily, in hope rest I (if gods may take duly revengement)
With gagd⁵ rocks compassed, then vainly "Dido" reciting
Thou shalt be punished. I'll with fire swartish hop after.
When death hath untwinēd my soul from carcase his holding,
I will, as hobgoblin, follow thee: thou shalt be sore handled.
I shall hear, I doubt not, thy pangs in Limbo related.

² Vagabond. ³ Celestial. ⁴ Uproar. ⁵ Jagged.

Except for a short passage from the eighth book Stanihurst went no further in his Virgilian translation. Instead he turned his attention to the Psalms, and tried the experiment of rendering the first four into blank verse, each in a different metre. This is not as grotesque as his *Aeneid*, though sufficiently so, considering the beauty and dignity of the original. A verse or two from each will shew the degree of success he attained:

PSALM I (iambics)

That man resembleth verily
The graffe¹ by river situate:
Yielding abundant plentiness
Of fruit, in harvest seasonēd.

Not so the sinful crēatures,
Not so their acts are prosperous;
But like the sand, or chaffy dust,
That windy puffs from ground do blow.

¹ A slip of a cultivated tree introduced into a wild one.

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PSALM II (elegiacs)

With frantic madness why frets the multitude heathen?
And to vain attemptings what fury stirs the people?
He scorns their working, that dwells in blessed Olympus:
And at their brainsick trumpery folly flireth.¹

¹ *flier* = *fleer*, to laugh, sneer, jeer.

PSALM III (asclepiads)

I fear not furious multitude infinite,
With compass labouring, my body for to catch.
Rise, Lord omnipotent, help me, my champion.
Lord, thy clear radiant righteous equity
Hath squeezed all my foes, falsely me ransacking.

PSALM IV (sapphics)

When that I call'd, with an humble outcry,
The God of Justice, meriting my safety,
In many dangers my weak heart upholding,
Swiftly did hear me.

Therefore all freshly, like one oft inur'd
With thy great goodness, yet again do crave Thee
Mercy to render, withal eke to grant me
Gracious heartening.

Tate and Brady's metrical version of the Psalms has been termed a "drysalter". Such an expression could not be applied to Stanihurst's work—the use of it would have moved any congregation to tears of laughter!

The remainder of the volume is for the most part occupied with translations from Sir Thomas More's Latin epigrams, with poems on his mistress Mary (which have already been dealt with), some epitaphs in Latin or English, a poem on the death of Lord Louth, and another on Lord Offaly. In this last the names of three places in Co. Kildare are introduced into a line:

Maynooth lamenteth, Kilkea and Rathangan are howling.

The most dignified poem in the volume, and the one most free from those oddities of style which have raised Stanihurst

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to a bad pre-eminence in English literature, is his *Prayer to the Trinity*, which commences:

Trinity blessed, Deity co-equal,
Unity sacred, God one eke in essence,
Yield to thy servant, pitifully calling,
Merciful hearing.

We might conclude by reminding the reader that many of the words which, to us, seem so odd and out of place in an epic poem were, in Stanihurst's day, good sound English. As an illustration may be taken the word "howling", which occurs a few lines back. At the present day it is often employed in a quasi-humorous sense, but it occurs in that "well of English undefiled," the Authorised Version of the Bible, which was made seven years before Stanihurst's death. Cf. Zechariah xi, 3: "A voice of the howling of the shepherds".

With an account of Stanihurst and his writings this book may be brought to a fitting conclusion. In its pages we have essayed the task, hitherto unattempted, of collecting into one volume all that is left, both in entire pieces and in fragments, of the literature of the Anglo-Irish settlers from the Invasion to the close of the 16th century. There only remains but a little of what must once have formed a great mass of poetry and prose. We believe that we have here gathered together all that is at present known to exist of that literature. But it is quite within the bounds of possibility that some future student, while searching amongst the archives of those noble families which still reside in Ireland, or in repositories of manuscripts outside the country, may unearth literary pieces, the existence of which has hitherto been unsuspected. That such a piece of good fortune may be the lot of some ardent student is the devout wish of the present writer.

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